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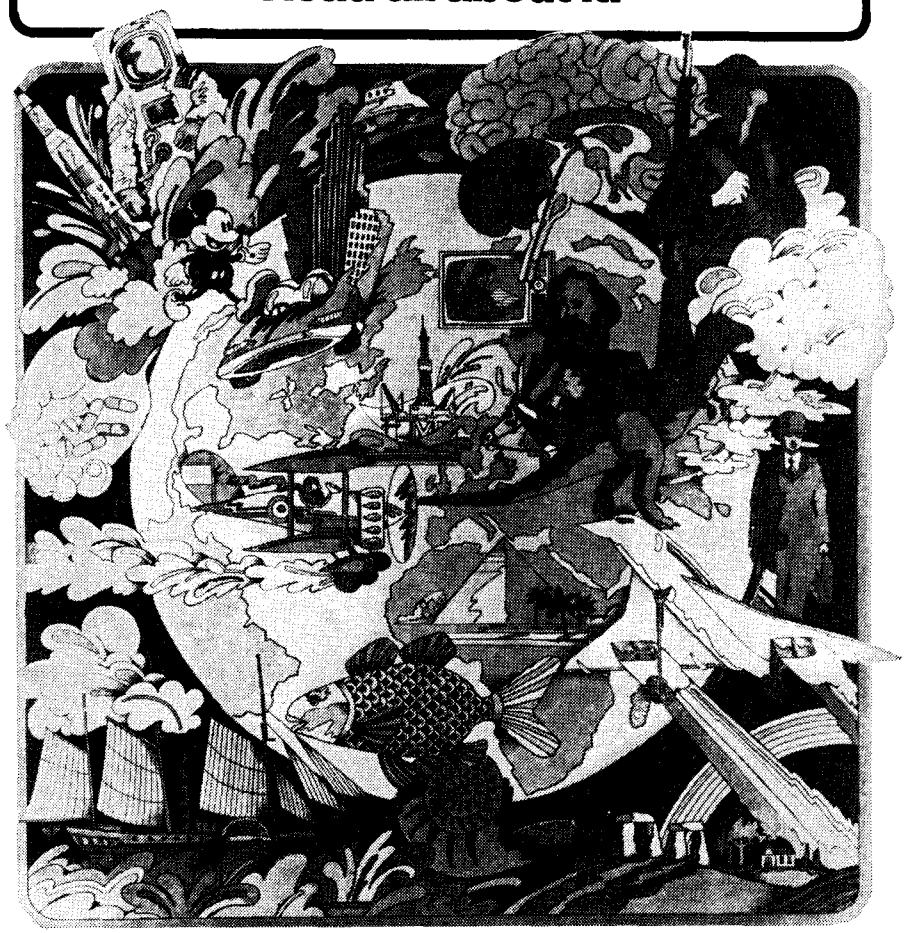

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Encounter

OCTOBER 1975

VOL. XLV NO. 4

Edited by MELVIN J. LASKY *and* ANTHONY THWAITE
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Published monthly by Encounter Ltd. (in association with the Open Court Publishing Co.).
Per copy: UK 50p: USA & Canada $1.25: Back numbers 65p ($2.00).
Annual subscription: UK £5.50: USA & Canada $14.00 (by air $15.50): Elsewhere £6.75.
Address for all Departments: Encounter Ltd., 59 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4JS (01-836 4194).
N. American Subscription Office: 1545 Argyle Road, LaSalle, Illinois 61301.
US news-stand distribution by Gordon & Gotch (USA) Inc. P.O. Box 1425, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.
Authorised as Second-class mail, Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for payment of postage in cash.
Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. ©*1975 by Encounter Ltd.*
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V. S. Pritchett

The Wedding

THE MARKET was over. Steaming in the warm rain of the June day the last of the cattle and sheep were being loaded into lorries or driven off in scattered troupes through the side streets of the town which smelled of animals, beer, small shops and ladies. The departing farmers left the exhaust of their cars hanging in the air. Tom Fletcher, the forty-year-old widower with a wilful twist of chestnut hair over his forehead where the skin had a knot of intention in it, drove off but got out at the open door of *The Lion* and putting his head down as if threatening to charge into the crowd there, shouted:

"Come on, Ted. Leave the women alone till Saturday", and Ted Archer came out and sat very tall in the car.

"That used to be a terrible place", Archer said. "The new people have done it up."

The pair drove twelve miles on the Langley road round the bottom of Scor, the hill which stuck up in a wooded lump over the slates of the town. To children of the town, Scor looked like the head of an old man and that image sank into their minds like a kindness when they grew up. They thought the quarry carved out of the hill was his mouth. Today the rain ran off the woods into the streams that were below him.

Driving up the long rise to Poll Cross the two men saw a woman come out of the larches, straight in the back and walking fast. She carried her head well.

"Effie Thomas must be hard up for it—going up the woods on a day like this", said Ted.

"Bugger", said Tom. He had the sly voice of someone enjoying a meal. "Someone got his knees wet. What's the matter with you, Ted? That's not Effie with a back like that. That's Mrs Johnson, the little bitch from the College, Mary's teacher. I'd give ten pounds to anyone who'd take her up Scor on a Sunday afternoon and pull her tights down. Filling my girl with a lot of parlez-vous. What's the good of French? Bugger, you can't talk French to your Herefords, Ted. Why don't you marry that teacher, Ted?"

"She's been married once already", said Ted.

"I know she has. She'll miss it, won't she then?" said Tom.

THEY CAUGHT HER UP and made her skip up on to the bank. The young woman had a rude look—very alluring.

"Jump in, you're getting your pretty hair wet, Mrs Johnson", said Fletcher, very courtly. "Get in the back. We'll drop you. You'll be all right. I've got Ted in the front with me and I've tied his hands."

"I have been enjoying my constitutional; but well, thank you. Yes, I will avail myself. . . ."

"Avail yourself of everything while you can. We dropped the pig at the market."

"How do you do, Mrs Johnson", said Ted when she got in and they drove on.

"Hear him? He speaks French", said Tom. "You ought to see his heifers go off round the fields when he talks to them. Like a horsefly under their tails."

"I can believe it", said Mrs Johnson who had a strict habit of giving a shake of her head for the sake of boldness. Fletcher was watching Mrs Johnson in the mirror. Her fair hair was drawn straight back from her forehead into a bun at the back. It was the kind of hair that frizzes and is almost white. She was a thin, plain young woman, her blue eyes were small.

"You'll be coming to the wedding, missus, Saturday?" said Fletcher.

"I am looking forward to it", she said. "Most kind of you to ask me." Her pretty voice was cooled by all the knowledge in her

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head.

Fletcher dropped into country speech and said to Ted:

"Tha was at school with me, warn't 'e, Ted? He's nobbut a rough farmer's boy, missus. Remember, Ted, poor old Lizzie Temple? Us dropping peppermints down her blouse?"

And then to Mrs Johnson:

"He'd begun already", he said. "That's 35 years ago. Never ride in the back of a car with him."

"I will think of that when the temptation occurs", Mrs Johnson said.

"When the temptation occurs. Did you hear that, Ted?"

Mrs Johnson said she had never seen the country so green and Tom said he had never seen Mrs Johnson's cheeks so blooming, which was a fancy for she was as pale as a bone and her humour was dry.

THEY ARRIVED AT her little cottage which stood back from the road on a short rise and when she got out she thanked Fletcher and in her firm way she said:

"I haven't given Mary up."

The little blue eyes were determined.

Tom Fletcher gave one of his loud laughs and called to her as she crossed the road:

"Run in quick, missus, or Ted'll chase you upstairs." But when they drove off Ted said:

"I can't stand so much forehead in a woman."

"Its the best part", said Tom. "But you wouldn't know that. But she's putting ideas into my Mary's head. It was all poor Doris's doing, sending the girl to a snobby College like that and now they want to send her to Oxford. Before Doris died I couldn't say anything, could I? But Doris has gone now. And Flo's getting married. I'll be alone in that house now, Ted, if I let Mary go."

"That's right, Tom. You will."

"Its all right for you, Ted, you dirty bugger, but I don't want my girl putting on airs and marrying a French professor. Where's the economics of it? Your family and mine, Ted, have farmed this land for 200 years, haven't they? That's what I call economics. I want my girl at home talking English. And doing the wages. I've told old mother Johnson so."

"How old is Mrs Johnson?"

"Too old for you, Ted, you old bugger. Turned thirty, but I tell you if she hadn't been a friend of Doris's I wouldn't have had her in the house, talking that classy stuff to Doris all day, about Louis IVth, the pair of them—they did, Ted, as if they were married to him. She wanted us to call one of my bulls Napoleon. . . ."

Fletcher's temper blew away into laughter.

"No, I haven't anything against her. She's got a head on her. It's an education to listen to her. But her husband made a poor job of her. Ask me—she never had it. She sent me the bloody forms to fill up. I've got enough forms. Well—she's not going to get Mary."

THEY GOT TO Ted's place and they went in to see the boxing on television. It annoyed Tom that although Ted hadn't got his money (for he often calculated that), Ted's house was a fine white place, fit for a gentleman, with peaches on its walled garden, well run.

"You bachelors look after yourselves", he said.

There was not a scratch on the paint inside the house, not a smear on the mahogany. If Ted hadn't won as many Prize Cups at the Shows as he had, there was not a speck on his carpets. There were portraits of Ted's grandfather and grandmother on the wall of the dining room; the decanters sparkled. A lot of money had gone down the drain in Ted's family, but the dining table could seat twenty-five and looked as if it was waiting for the whole tribe of Ted's forbears to come back and throw away more money if he reformed and got married.

"My place has been let go since Doris died", Tom said jealously as he watched the boxing. "Old Mrs Prosser comes in but she's past it. That was a low one, see that?"

They were watching the middle of a fight.

"It will be all right after the wedding", said Ted.

"All right? What d'you mean? I'll be alone in the house like you, you bugger. His eye's cut."

"Mary's a good girl. She's got brains", Ted said. "You'll have to look around, Tom."

"Look at that—footwork, footwork. The lad'll never get anywhere with that. Hit him, boy. Look around? You haven't left much around, have you, you old sod."

"There's old Mrs Arkwright. You'll have to do a deal", said Ted slyly.

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"Bugger that for a deal", said Tom. "She's had one of my tractors for a month up there. I'd sooner old Mrs Doggett. If she was 20 years younger I'd have her. You remember how you lassoed her at Bill Hawkins' wedding? The old girl's got a kick on her."

"She did the can-can", shouted Ted, getting a drink. "I bet you Mrs Johnson can do a can-can. She's been in Paris."

The laughter stopped. A mean look came into Fletcher's face.

"She's been divorced", he said. He stuck out his lip. "They oughtn't to have a woman like that in the College. All the la-di-da did it. But we all know who she is."

"Old Charlie Tilly's daughter", said Ted.

"The seedsman who used to have *The Lion* till he drank it dry", said Tom.

"News travels", sighed Ted. "There was no money there. She ran off with some Society man."

"If I'd been Charlie Tilly I'd have tanned her arse. She never told him, just ran off and they didn't see or hear of her for twelve years", said Tom.

"Mrs Tilly didn't know anything until she saw a picture of her in a magazine at the dentist's—all dolled up at Ascot races. High society", said Ted.

"And comes back here as if nothing had happened."

They sat in silence and then Fletcher said:

"She ran through £20,000 of her husband's money.

He swelled with satisfaction at the size of the sum and at the thought that a local girl could do that.

"She s got a brain. Ah now, look at that—he's marking him.

They watched the fight to the end.

MESSELL, THE ART MASTER at the College, came into Mrs Johnson's study. It had once been the housekeeper's room in the large country house which the College rented. For five years since she came out of hospital after her divorce and the rest of her scandal she had been teaching here.

Messell said: "What's the matter with the town bull's daughter, Christine? I've just passed her in the corridor wiping her eyes."

Mrs Johnson considered Messell for a while.

"Her sister is getting married. She is quarrelling with her father. I am going to the wedding", she said.

"It's this place", said Messell. "It's too grand for them. How many of them have got ball-rooms 40 feet high with painted ceilings in their homes? They walk about dreaming they are duchesses."

Messell was wearing a cape and a violet tunic done up with small buttons high on the neck and there his round face rested on it like a detachable moon. His large round eyes were vain of their woes. It would be no surprise, she thought, to see him carrying his head in his hand for he had the look of one wishing he had been executed in more dashing times than the present.

"Speak for yourself", she said in her bossy way. "Why shouldn't they think they are duchesses? I always wanted to be one. Girls are practical. They are new things: they have to invent themselves."

"Did you invent yourself?" Messell said.

"Of course", said Mrs Johnson.

Messell had the prowling gaze of one who is vain of seeing through people.

"Why", he asked "why did we leave London for a dump like this?"

"We?" she said. "I have to earn my living. What are you going to do this half-term?"

It was impossible to get anything out of Mrs Johnson.

"Sleep", he said. "Drink. What are you going to do?"

"I told you I'm going to the wedding tomorrow", she said.

"Why are women so mad about weddings?" he sneered.

"We live for the future", she said. "Why don't you go to London and commit a sin?"

The sun was beginning to shimmer in the summer mists in the morning as she drove towards the town.

WHEN SHE HAD FIRST come to teach in the school, five years ago, she was uneasy at the sight of the countryside she had left when she was a girl and rarely left the park that surrounded the place. She did not want to be seen. But after a year she drove defiantly into Langley: she had to face it. It was enemy country: the enemy was her childhood. When she saw Scor hill coming out boldly in the summer mists and the slate roofs of the town

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in its hollow, every house, every window flashed old dull hatreds. In time they vanished and became no more than a tale: for the place emptied. The people in the shops and in the streets looked unreal. She seemed at once a ghost and yet the only real and living person there. It annoyed her that the people she passed and looked at so intensely did not ask to know who she was. She compelled herself on one of these early visits to stand in front of *The Lion* where her father had brought her to live when she was six and he had married again. It was a mean little place but it sparkled now and she looked at the top bedroom window at the front where she had so often stood out-staring the dry, Biblical brick of the Baptist chapel opposite, a building that seemed to forbid the thoughts in her head. It now looked feeble; she had outwitted it. How much shouting had gone on in the family. How proud she had been her name was Tilly and not the name of her handsome step-sisters whose beauty had looked greedy and common to her. They had grown up and married now. The only unmarried one was living in another pub at Fenn twenty miles away, with her stepmother.

After that long compelled stare she never visited the place again but when she went to the town nowadays her ghost at the windows of the place eyed her from the street she avoided. Guilt gave way to a new regret which went on for years—that she had never brought her husband to see the place where her plots and ambitions were born, because she was afraid. Once, on one of her low evenings this last year she had been on the point of telling Messell her story, for in his prowling way he had sniffed out that she was a fellow casualty; but she stopped herself. He was not up to it. He was muddy with remorse about something: he lacked the secret pride of prodigals and had stopped at dressing up.

TODAY AS SHE DROVE, Scor hill came up stealthily. She parked her car and went into the church she had not been in since she was a child. It looked smaller, of course, and the Latin inscriptions on the tablets of the stone walls seemed nearer. She read one, looking for howlers out of habit. The organ dribbled out a squealing flourish and for a moment she could hear her husband's voice calling to her in that church at Toulon on their honeymoon saying "Here's one: Look at this." They were looking for the tomb of a Comte de Tillet. The Tillys were French émigrés she had told him! The unforgivable thing about him was that he had the innocence of the rich and accepted her fantasies as a compliment to himself. But now the organ came out into a bellow from all Tom Fletcher's herds and Fletcher came up the aisle with Mary's sister, the bride. He came forward, extraordinarily proper in step, with his crested head lowered, chin forward on his short strong neck, his brow knotting as his eyes marked the site of the altar as if he would pause to pad his feet and lower his shoulders and gallop the last three yards, catch the vicar and send him flying in his surplice. Yet he stopped with the ease of a man at the market.

"Doesn't it strike you", she wanted to say to the congregation, to keep her distinction, "doesn't it strike you as all rather indecent?"

But her question was sung down by the hymns, particularly by an aunt of the bride who was sitting behind her and by an uncle as pink-skinned as a salmon. The restiveness of the ceremony got into her waist and legs and afterwards when she left the church she was smiling and excited by the chatter in the short avenue of tomb stones outside. She drove on to Fletcher's house and felt for the first time since her divorce, unmarried. The eyes of the other women sparkled with the same brief hungry thought themselves.

At the farm was the marquee striped in red and white on the lawn—Mary had boasted that it would be there. What a day for boasting! The scene was like a flower show and between the hats of the ladies she saw the long view of the fields and woods and hills buzzing in the sun, and the cattle down below slowly moving up the fields curiously, as excited as the crowd, to the garden hedge. It was astonishing to find herself among so many tall young men whose tanned necks stuck out of their white collars. The bride was in full folly, queening it before the groom, rushing him from one group to another as though she was going to eat them all. Fletcher stood confidently among his guests, shouting in his meaty way, yet bowing —really *bowing*—to the ladies, old and young. The tuneful aunt spoke to Mrs Johnson and she, feeling that a fantasy of the learned kind

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was called for, said in a ringing voice:

"Mr Fletcher has the head of a Roman Emperor."

The aunt was baffled. Mrs Johnson explained:

"As one might be seeing it on a medallion."

"He won two First prizes at Cottesbury", said the aunt, who belonged enthusiastically to contemporary life.

Mrs Johnson repeated her remark to the vicar who nodded and she was inspired to develop the idea.

"One forgets how much of Roman wealth must have been in cattle."

This news made the Vicar anxious to move away and he adroitly introduced her to another aunt.

"This is Mary's famous Mrs Johnson", he said.

"If only poor Doris could have seen this day. This is what Tom has just said to me. It is sad. She was the love of his life", said the aunt.

THAT SENTENCE rang through Mrs Johnson's head all the afternoon. At some time or other everyone in the town and the countryside would take a long breath and utter it. Ted Archer had innumerable loves of his life: her step-sisters had been thick in the gossip of these loves. On every day of the week, except the day of the Cattle Market, the town was enthralled by love of every kind, even when money went over the counters in shops or ladies went to the library or drank their tea. Window blinds signalled it. One looked at the unlikely people, but the sentence ran from glance to glance.

Mrs Arkwright, sitting in the tent on a chair that was sinking into the grass and colouring up with champagne and the heat, uttered the sentence to Mrs Johnson and went on:

"I lost my husband—I know. But we mustn't think of ourselves. It's Mary I'm worried about, losing a sister. Tom will be alone in the house. My heart bleeds for that man."

Mrs Arkwright's heart was panting.

"I'm resting because of my leg. I must get some air."

She obliged Mrs Johnson to help her into the garden.

"It's not like one of your London weddings", she said. "Ah, there's Tom, poor man. As I was saying, Mary ought to get away. I'm on your side. *You* understand."

Mrs Arkwright threw away a cigarette and coughed into the flower bed and then turned to consider the pleasant house.

"It's sheltered", she said, lighting another cigarette and giving a pull to her waist for she was large, boxed into her clothes, dark-haired, brimming with love of fate. "He's letting it go. I don't mean anything nasty, but the sitting-room paint! And then upstairs—you can see for yourself there's no woman. And Mary at the College: she is too young. Of course you can't say anything to *him*. But I agree with you."

Mrs Johnson got away to the hedge at the bottom of the garden and Tom Fletcher came up to her.

"Is that Scor?" she said. "What a lovely view."

"I can see twenty miles of steak, missus", Tom Fletcher said and he called to Ted Archer:

"Come here, you bugger. Mrs Johnson wants you to take her up Scor hill."

"I went up there when I was a child", said Mrs Johnson primly. Fletcher sent out one of his bellows of laughter.

"I never met a woman here who hasn't", he shouted and gave Ted Archer a punch.

THE AFTERNOON moved on from laugh to laugh. There was silence for a speech about the secret of happiness. The bride laughed and pouted. The groom said "All I can say is she is a smashing girl." And that over, the men got into groups and talked about their farms and the children played hide and seek around the skirts of the women as the afternoon lolled in the fields and Scor became plainer and nearer, like the cattle moving up. At last the women moved to the front door of the house, waiting for the couple to come down and one or two young men shouted up at the window:

"Come on, Jim, can't you wait?"

Three of the men went into the drive to the car under the dusty elms and the young children now climbed on to the flint wall by the yard, the girls grabbing at the legs of the boys. The afternoon wheeled and cooled, short shadows edged their way out from the trees. Mrs Arkwright came slowly across the lawn

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and pushed her way to stand by Fletcher in the crowd by the door. There was a scrimmage, the confetti flew, the photographers calmed them all down, there was a click as time stopped. Then shouts. Tom Fletcher went down with Mary and the couple to the car and he picked up a child that had fallen on the way. Ted Archer blew his hunting horn and off went the car and young men slapped on the roof. As it crawled out on to the lane a man suddenly scrambled on top of the roof and was carried away, banging violently on top of it. A bottle fell from his pocket and broke on the road.

"Who's that?" said Fletcher.

But the car had gone.

"Oh God", said Mrs Johnson to herself. "Messell. He's drunk. How did he get here?"

The young men went into the lane and watched and after a long time back came Messell without his cape, in his violet shirt, covered in dust and a trouser leg torn.

"It's all right", he shouted. "I'm impotent. I want Mrs Johnson. Where's Mrs Johnson", he shouted as he stumbled into the drive.

MRS JOHNSON dodged up the steps into the house. What a disaster! How had he got there? She hid in the bathroom: she could just see him swaying and talking among the men who were looking at him in silence and then she saw him sit on a grass bank. She came down to the large empty sitting-room. It had not changed since Doris's time. All those thin silver vases! And the photographs of the Shows, the smell of roses and cigarettes and the family chairs empty. The seats had slackened since Doris's time, helplessly. Peering from the window, Mrs Johnson saw children watching Messell: he had got up again. She did not know where to go for safety. She went along to a room she remembered: the one Fletcher called his office. The blinds were down to keep out the sun and in the low light she could see only the glimmer of the silver cups Fletcher had won. She went in and listened.

"Little Chris Tilly."

She stiffened at the lazy, insinuating impertinence of his voice. She had not heard her maiden name spoke for years.

Fletcher was sitting at his desk looking at his wages sheets.

"Oh, I'm sorry", said Mrs Johnson. "I didn't see you. I came in to the cool."

"Who are you chasing?" he said.

There was suddenly loud shouting from the yard.

"Stay there a minute", he said. "I want to say a word to you."

He went out and soon came back.

"Did you bring that professor with you?"

"Certainly not."

"I don't want any professors here. I've got enough trouble with government inspectors. You've got some funny people up at the College, missus."

He stared at her rudely and she set her chin.

"Well, don't go. Sit down with me. Look at all this stuff. Forms, forms, forms. Buggered if I can read them. Mary'll have to do it. Have you taught her to read forms? How to pay wages—that's what a girl needs. That's education. Well, that's where it all goes", he said and he picked up the papers and dropped them into a waste paper basket.

Mrs Johnson smiled, but Fletcher scowled slyly.

"*And* the forms you sent me, missus. My girl's staying here. No offence, missus, but you've had your turn, now it's mine."

"Don't let us discuss it now. It's been a lovely wedding. Flo was so pretty. And such a nice young man."

"He'll do if he can make anything out of 100 acres. If she makes him work. You can have all the professors at Oxford and Cambridge, but my girl stays here, missus, and she knows it. You've got to tell her. If she won't listen to me, she'll listen to you."

He paused and said bluntly.

"Little Chris Tilly's got a head on her. She didn't lose it in Paris."

Mrs Johnson was startled and she blushed. He had brought her childhood back, brutally, knowingly. It was as if he had undressed her.

"She's got the best brain in the school", she said. "She's desperate. You don't want to lose her. Mrs Arkwright was talking to me. . . ."

Tom Fletcher reddened as he stared at her.

"Old Mother Arkwright doesn't know her arse from her elbow. My daughter's my business."

"I don't think this is the time to talk about it", said Mrs Johnson. "Mary's a prize winner." And she waved towards the cups on his shelves. "Like you. Don't you think she should choose?"

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"No", said Fletcher. "I never chose. You didn't choose."

"But I did."

"So they tell me", he said morosely. "I haven't anything against you, missus. But I've got 1500 acres." He looked around the room. "Look at the state those cups are in. Old Mrs Prosser comes in, but now Flo's gone who will clean them?"

FLETCHER was himself startled by his own turn of mind. A shout from the yard disturbed him. Mary ran into the room. She stopped when she saw Mrs Johnson and her father.

"They're chasing Mr Messell, Mrs Johnson", she said anxiously.

"Let 'em chase him", said Fletcher, getting up. "I've said all I want to say. Let's see what the lads are doing. You like a bit of sport. This isn't your first wedding here", he shouted and when he got up he gave her a slap on the bottom. "Come on."

He pushed Mrs Johnson to the door and when they got out on to the steps of the house, there were Ted Archer and two or three others, in their black wedding clothes, but now with ropes in their hands. One of the farmers had flung out his rope and lassooed another who was getting out of it, just as Archer was sending out his rope at Messell, who dodged. In a moment three men were out for Messell who dodged again and backed to the yard wall and then suddenly slipped through a gap at the side of it. They were after him.

Cars started up. The guests were going. The young farmers came back, followed by Messell. They were tired of him and he flopped down on to the grass bank.

The children visited him from time to time with wonder: he was stretched out asleep on the grass. Tom Fletcher winked at Ted Archer who sent out his rope and caught one of the aunts. She screamed with such pleasure that one of the men rushed at her, picked her up in his arms and carried her to the open boot of his car and dumped her into it as she kicked up with her legs. She climbed out and her hair came down. Three other ladies doubled up with inciting laughter and mocked the men. One by one the men chased and caught them. Tom Fletcher's red face swelled like a turkey cock's: he was shouting.

"Give us the can-can, Mrs Doggett", he shouted as the old lady's legs went up in the air. The aunt with the beautiful voice climbed out of the boot of a car and dared them to catch her again. Mary Fletcher stood near Mrs Johnson laughing and called out: "Go on", to the men. The dust flew. The skirts went up, the hair came down. Then it all stopped and the women got together, panting, tidying their clothes and now daring Tom Fletcher who had picked up a rope. Mrs Johnson took the opportunity to go to Fletcher and in her politest manner said:

"Goodbye, Mr Fletcher. I'm afraid I have to go. I have an engagement. It has been a lovely wedding."

"Go?" he said. "You can't go."

But she went off to her little car. He watched her. He levelled the rope.

"Mrs Johnson", Mary called.

Fletcher's rope snaked out, knocked Mrs Johnson's hat over her eyes and was over her shoulders and tightening on her waist. He pulled her stumbling towards him.

"Daddy", shouted Mary.

Mrs Johnson's helplessly startled face hardened as she got her footing and showed her bold teeth at him. The other women had laughed when they were caught, but she did not. She pulled fiercely at the rope and she surprised him by a sharp pull that got it out of his hands. He made a grab at it and missed. He was stupefied as she stared at him. The aunts watched in silence. Slowly Mrs Johnson got out of the rope, carefully picked it up and walked to her car. Mary rushed after her.

"Go away, child", said Mrs Johnson and the girl rushed back to her father with tears in her eyes and then ran into the house, red-cheeked with shame.

They saw Mrs Johnson arranging her hair in her car mirror. Fletcher stood there scowling and silent and everyone stared at him. Ted Archer dropped his own rope. Fletcher grinned uncomfortably and then Mrs Johnson drove off fast. They stood listening to the sound of her car as it went over the hill behind the farm.

"Tom", said Ted Archer. "She's gone off with your rope."

Five pigeons on the roof of the house flew off in a wide circle. They seemed to be following her. Messell got up from the grass and walked towards Fletcher.

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"Sir, that was not the act, that was not the act, act. . . ." He could not go on.

"Bugger off", said Fletcher and went sullenly into the house, shouting for his daughter.

"INTOLERABLE", Mrs Johnson muttered as she drove fast to the main road, looking into the mirror to see if she was followed.

"Little Chris Tilly"—the countryside had broken its long silence about her; he was mocking her, all those ridiculous women, so polite to her face, were mocking her. She did not mind that but to be roped in like that, by a man, with the lot of them, was too much. She could feel the grit of the dirty rope on her neck, feel its bite on her waist and see the dusty marks on her dress and despite her temper, she felt weak. She looked in the mirror again and again, feared still that she was followed and could not get his stare, as he threw the rope at her, out of her head. The fear was strong enough to make her get off the main road and take the long way home, looking for some private place where she could straighten her clothes and when she found one she stopped her car and went nervously into the trees and pulled up her blouse to see whether her skin was marked. There were no marks.

"All the same!" she protested and drove on even more angily and she was impatient at the girl's tears.

"She'll have to fight for herself", she said. "I did. After this I'm not going to raise a finger for her. Anyway she'll fall for the first man she sees and that will be the end of her."

The evening clouded as she sat restlessly in her cottage trying to read and stopping to look from the windows as each car went by and at last went into her back garden. The air was heavy, the trees were darkening and still. There was a large elm in the field beyond: the creature was oppressive in its huge, spreading silence, waiting.

She sat in a deck-chair watching the grass grow dimmer. Presently an inexplicable eddy of wind passed across the field until, striking the elm, it swirled into it, lifting and parting the branches, opening wild eyes of sky; like men the wind had got into it and were tearing it; it heaved and swelled and raved for a full minute and then suddenly its madness passed.

"I shall go to London. I must get hold of someone. Who shall I ring", she said. She went indoors and got out her suitcase and began getting dresses out of a cupboard, holding them up and then throwing them on the bed. Only one she picked up again.

"You little tart", she said, "where have you been?" And she threw it down again. There was a knock at her door.

"Fletcher", she said and stood, all the strength running coldly out of her legs and then rushing back up her body and tossing in her head.

"No, Messell of course", she said to deceive herself. She looked out of the window and saw a bicycle standing against the garden wall.

"It's me. It's Mary", the girl's voice called.

The girl stood white-faced and hot in the little sitting room. She said:

"I'm not going back. Oh, Mrs Johnson I've run away. I'll never forgive him."

Mrs Johnson made her sit down and the girl cried on her shoulder.

"It was so insulting to you", she was saying.

"Why", thought Mrs Johnson as she listened to the girl. "Why have I got to relive my life?"

And when she said this sensations of triumph sparked in her and her heart was warm. Years of self-accusation vanished from her and the headlong tenderness of being young flowed in.

"But I was not insulted at all. Surprised, yes, but it was rather a compliment", she said.

The girl looked gravely and mistrustfully at Mrs Johnson.

"Did you tell them you were coming here?"

"No", said the girl.

"Good heavens", said Mrs Johnson. "We must get you back at once. I'll take you. They'll be out of their minds. At this hour."

"I saw your face", said the girl.

"You mustn't go by faces", said Mrs Johnson. She went back to her bookcase and picked out a book. "This is what I promised to lend you. I was going to bring it this morning."

The girl held the book in bewilderment.

"I shall tell your father you came for the book", Mrs Johnson said.

She told the girl to read the book while she

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made some tea. It was called *Rambouillet: The Art of Conversation.*

"You wrote it", exclaimed the girl.

"Yes, I did. I was going to bring it to give it to you at the wedding, but I forgot. Better late than never."

SHE DROVE the girl back to the farm where Ted Archer was standing at the door.

"She's here", called Archer and Fletcher came rushing out.

"Mrs Johnson forgot to give me this", the girl said, "I've been to fetch it."

"At this hour?" said Fletcher as Mary kissed him.

"We've been all over the countryside looking for her", said Ted Archer quietly to Mrs Johnson as they went inside. "They had words."

They sat on the large shabby chairs and Fletcher listened silently to Mrs Johnson's chatter about the wedding, staring at her and when at last she made him laugh, she put on a prudish busy face and got up to go at once.

"I'll be up tomorrow for my rope", he shouted as she switched on the car lights and drove off. It was the only time he spoke. His shout seemed to own the night.

When she got back to her cottage, she lay on her bed. "Oh, no", she said in the little hot room. A heavy night of throwing off bed-clothes and trivial dreams of voices and faces and Fletcher sitting in his chair staring at her! And then—what a triumph—in the morning there was a pink mark on her waist: it had come up in the night. She would have liked to have shown it to him.

She washed her hair and was sitting with a scarf round it, looking harsh and prim, when Fletcher came in the afternoon.

She put on an impudent mouth when he came to the door. She took the rope down from a hook.

"Here is what you came for."

He took it and dropped it down outside on the step and then came and sat down. She sat on the sofa.

"You've done something to this place since the old postman had it. It belonged to Randall; he was a fool to let it go. We got a bit rough, as Mary says. But I told her I could see you were on your way and the best way to get a lady to stay is to stop her from going! I know, I know—the lads were rough."

"Well", said Mrs Johnson. "I am not cattle. I suppose it was what one would have to call a country junket."

"I can't bear the stuff", said Fletcher innocently. "We used to give it to the girls, with prunes, when they wanted loosening."

Mrs Johnson sat very upright on the sofa.

"I had an engagement", she said.

"That's just what I said to Mary—she's been carrying on. I said you'd got an engagement." He was mocking.

"How is Mary?" said Mrs Johnson.

"Girls get excited by weddings", he said. "You saw the heifers. News spreads. You've been married and so have I—it makes a difference. What's that?"

He pointed to a picture hanging on the wall beside the fireplace. It seemed to be a foam of pink ice cream and lace and then he saw the vanishing chalk outline of a doll or a girl floating in the foam, possibly on a garden swing: there was a pink face, two indigo blurs for her eyes, the poppy red of a droopy mouth. The creature was either just appearing or disappearing in the paint.

"Its a Vandenesse", she said, recovering her grand voice. "French."

He nodded.

"Expensive, I expect", he said.

"My husband gave £750 for it", said Mrs Johnson coldly. Fletcher was silent, then he said:

"A rich man."

"Very", said Mrs Johnson.

"Yes, that's what I heard."

Fletcher came to sit on the sofa to get a better view of it.

"Bugger, I sold a bull last week for £2,000. Who is it supposed to be?"

"It's a portrait of the Comtesse de Tillet", she said.

He nodded.

"It would look funny in a farm house", he said.

"Yes, but this is not a farm house", she said.

Mrs Johnson gave a shake of her head to change the subject.

"I WAS WRITING you a letter", she said, pointing to the table by the window where she had been typing. "But you throw letters away, don't you, so coming here you've saved me a sheet of paper. I have been

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thinking of what you said to me yesterday about Mary. I've changed my mind since last night. I agree with you. Mary's better off at home."

"What's this?" said Fletcher, startled. "Turn about I see. Are you telling me she's not good enough?"

"Oh, she's a clever girl", said Mrs Johnson. "Simply—I was mistaken."

"You're saying she's not good enough."

"Not at all. I've changed my mind."

His face was amiable.

"I'll tell you what you are, missus. You're a bloody liar", he laughed. "And I'll tell you something else. That picture's not the Countess of whatever you call her: it's you. Mary told me."

"It is the title of the picture. I have the catalogue", she said.

"It's you. Only he's taken all your bones out. He ought to have knocked something off the price for that. When I am buying an animal I want to see how it stands. I look at its bones."

"I am sure you do", said Mrs Johnson sharply. "But my husband was buying a work of art, not an animal. Don't you like it? The dress is very pretty, don't you think? I love the dress. I've got it upstairs. I was taking it to London tomorrow—very silly, of course, it's so out of date."

It was delightful to sit there, looking so plain, and to mock him. She got to her feet.

"I'll get it", she said. "No", he said standing up and he held both her arms. "Stay where you are. You and me have got to do a deal. I want you over at the farm."

"But I'm going to London. What deal? I know—you want me to clean all those cups."

"I did them myself this morning", he said intently, "I want you down at the farm and we'll do what you like about Mary."

In the cottage room the short man seemed to shut out the afternoon light. He was looking into her small blue eyes and she saw he dismissed the fight in them and in her chin. He let go of one arm and neatly pulled the scarf from her head so that her damp fair hair straggled to her shoulders. She put on a face of horror that gave a twist to her parted lips, but the horror was growing into a pleasure in itself. It heated and was growing into a noise in her head as he stared at her and yet in quick glances he was also taking in the room, the door, the furniture, the cushions, the books and did not even spare the rugs on the floor. His stare was the stare of the hunt.

"Sit down. Please let me go", she said.

She was astonished, she was disappointed, when he sat down.

"Tom", she said. "Me. On a farm. Are you mad?"

"You know my name, anyway", he said. "I'm not mad."

And then he said simply:

"You brought Mary home."

"Of course I did. What do you imagine?" she said.

"You brought Mary home", he said again.

"You don't know anything about me", she said.

"I know everything about you." He nodded at the picture. "He's got your mouth."

"My mouth?" she said. She could not resist turning to the picture and looking at it with a moment's pride and then the horror came back into her face and she mocked again.

"You go by mouths too", she said.

"Yes", he said and pulled her gently by the hand to the sofa where she skilfully sat away from him.

"My hair is wet", she said, pushing it back over her ears. "What a sight I must be. Go on—what are you saying? You want a housekeeper? Now there's Mrs Arkwright. . . ."

He did not let her finish the sentence. She was pushing his hands away, his arms, opening her mouth to speak, her ears full of din and her eyes scattering her hatred until, in a pause, her skin burned and her eyes dulled as his were dulled and her lips drooped, when his kissing stopped.

"At least", she said in a hard low voice into his coat, "At least lock the door."

THERE WAS A LOT OF TALK at the Shows that summer when Fletcher and she and sometimes Mary too, drove off together. Ted Archer denied it all until Tom had his house repainted and Mrs Johnson left the College and sold her cottage. Messell went about saying Vandenesse was a third-rate painter with a knack of catching girls inventing themselves but no good when they had turned thirty.

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George Watson

Was the New Left a Success?

Sages on the English Scene

THE LITERARY SOURCES of the New Left make a modest subject for the historian, especially if he confines his attentions to England. One nation, in such a matter, is unlikely to count for much, and England in any case was never pre-eminent in the field: the New Left from the start was international, its German ideological roots and American excitability spreading rapidly to France and Japan. Its chief flowering was in the United States in the 1960s; and its noisiest and most hectic existence was lived out in the great mass-universities of North America and the European Continent, never in the shy, selective backwaters of British academic life.

It was modest, too, in the time-scale. As an active and visible movement the New Left lasted for less than a decade, from the California of 1964 to the withdrawal of American troops from Indo-China in 1971–2. In the ancient traditions of Marxism, a faith now well over a century old, this is little more than a bubble on the ocean surface. One might even argue, in a reasonable if hard-faced sort of way, that in real terms the New Left never amounted to much, since the Marxists who really matter are those who govern one-third of the human race and want to govern the rest. And in the British context, those who take themselves to where power is: not to universities, that is to say, but to Parliament and to the vital power-points of the trade-union movement.

Such arguments should fail to daunt the literary historian precisely because they are true. A subject can be the more inviting for being delimited, and the literary sources of the New Left, in any case, make a strong appeal to the historical temper. They are themselves, after all, historiographical documents. I doubt if any political movement in recent times has been so deeply obsessed with the past as this one. Mass political parties usually have very short memories; it is even difficult, in a General Election, to maintain the interest of voters in the events of the Parliament just dissolved. But the temper of popular politics is very unacademic. The New Left, by contrast, was always strenuously academic and firmly chained in its arguments to an ancient scripture. Its sacred writings were the early papers of Marx, notably the Paris manuscripts of 1844, and their modern commentaries.[1] From the start it was committed to a traditional, 19th-century dogma that "capitalism" must inevitably give way to "socialism"—a view which, since the 1950s, has been considered even in the Soviet Union to have been outmoded by events. It accepted unquestioningly, and from the start, the spectrum-view of political opinion as a struggle between Left and Right. In England its literary texts, such as Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), and Raymond Williams's *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (1958), were essentially retrospective studies of 19th- and early 20th-century England. Any university teacher who was active in the 1960s will recall how colleagues and students of that persuasion commonly chose literary and historical studies within the period from the 1830s to the first World War. The cult-figures, at least among native Britons, were such men as Carlyle, William Morris, Ruskin, and Keir Hardie. It was always a neo-Victorian enthusiasm, and it is no wonder if it helped to revive a fashion for beards.

[1] These were first published by S. Landshut and in the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin, 1932); an English version by Martin Milligan appeared in Moscow in 1960. The acquaintance of the British New Left with these documents seems to have been as late as that; see Raymond Williams, "The Future of Marxism", *Twentieth Century* (July 1961), who at that early stage welcomed them only coolly: "The independent Marxists of the West have been turning, recently, to the early thought of Marx, in particular to the concept of 'alienation' .... I cannot say that I myself find in early Marx anything more than a series of brilliant hints and guesses, but I may be wrong...."

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WHAT IS MORE, the New Left was from the start intensely conscious of its own history. When I was in Berkeley in the late autumn of 1964, demonstrators at the University of California often handed out leaflets which included long chronologies listing the day-by-day evolution of protest over the recent months: how the university had forbidden the sale of political literature on one day, how the partisans of free speech had reacted on the next, and how the academic authorities had responded to that.... The self-importance of the New Left, which was always considerable, was from the start historically self-conscious. It behaved as if future historians, and historians not far in the future at that, must one day raise their pens and write about it. Its auto-intoxication was archival. He who controls the past controls the future, as the rulers of George Orwell's 1984 believed. The New Left went further than that: it sought to control its own history as it went. But it is itself, by now, a fact of the past.

LET ME NOW ATTEMPT a brief backward view of the immediate literary sources of the British New Left. The *New Left Review* began to appear in January 1960, incorporating the Oxford journal *Universities & Left Review* (1957–9) and the *New Reasoner* (1957–60), both of them dissident Communist journals emerging from the break-up of official Communism in the West after the Soviet invasion of Hungary in October 1956 and the rise of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1957–8. The editor of the *New Left Review* was Stuart Hall, a young Oxford graduate, and its first editorial board included Doris Lessing, Alasdair MacIntyre, Ralph Miliband, Edward Thompson, and Raymond Williams—all academics, or academics-to-be, apart from Mrs Lessing the novelist. In its first editorial it struck a note of utopian socialism hostile both to Western consumerism and to Soviet brutality, and Victorian sources were promptly invoked: "The humanist strengths of socialism ... must be developed in cultural and social terms, as well as economic and political ..."; the editor began and ended with sonorous quotations from William Morris, exclaiming "How close Morris came to the bone!" In the same year the series New Left Books was launched, its first volume being *Out of Apathy* (1960) by Edward Thompson and others.

The literary foundations of the New Left in England lie further back than 1960, but not much. A little spate of academic books of the 1950s heralds the approach: Hoggart and Williams in 1957–8; studies of the English Civil War by Christopher Hill, who left the Communist Party over Hungary and who, as an historian, escaped the usual socialist obsession with the Victorians; and Edward Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, a substantial study that did not appear until 1963. All this is more or less academic historiography, though *The Uses of Literacy* (which is several books worked into one) also smacks of autobiography and popular sociology. The leadership of the New Left in England was overwhelmingly a movement of academic historians, and after the first years there are few plays, poems or novels to add to the chronicle. Doris Lessing was not a political novelist for long, whatever her convictions. The first of John Osborne's plays to be produced in the West End of London, *Look Back in Anger*, opened at the Royal Court Theatre in May 1956, months before the double trauma of the invasion of Hungary and the Suez War. The mood of its first act offered a vivid prediction of the New Left, then still unborn; and his next play, *The Entertainer* (1957), confirmed that mood. But Osborne shifted rapidly from the Left in the 1960s, and his later plays occupy no easily definable place on the political map; while Arnold Wesker, whose early plays *Roots* (1959) and *I'm Talking about Jerusalem* (1960), etc., chime in with early Osborne, has since failed to hold a successful place in the West End theatre. The poems of Christopher Logue and Adrian Mitchell hang lightly in the balance.

In the wider field of cultural journalism, it is true, the New Left was more lastingly effective, both in periodicals and in paperbacks. The theatre criticism of Kenneth Tynan, the most influential dramatic critic in London from the early 1950s down to his appointment in 1963 as Literary Manager of the New National Theatre, gave it massive journalistic support. Tynan had turned Brechtian with startling rapidity a few years after coming down from Oxford, from an early career dedicated to Noel Coward and Terence Rattigan. In 1955–6, reviewing productions of Brecht in Paris and London, he conceived German Epic Theatre to be the harsh medicine the West End needed to purge it of triviality, though on fashionable rather than dogmatic grounds. "Unless we learn it soon, a familiar process will take place, ... and the future of the

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theatre may have been strangled in its cot," he wrote in 1956.[2] In the same year he helped Osborne with an *Observer* review which confirmed his resounding success. But the future will not hesitate to conclude that the New Left, as a sustained literary phenomenon, stands or falls as a kind of history and as a way of reading the past. Its contribution to fiction, poetry, and drama was lively for an instant, but too short-lived to count.

THIS STUDY, THEN, AMOUNTS TO an obituary or autopsy on a school of history. In the worldly sense, it was a highly successful school. Some of its books sold massively enough to enrich their authors and to pitchfork them with notable suddenness into posts of emolument. The New Left will some day deserve to be studied in these terms, when the accounts are opened and the wills are read; but it may already be hailed as an outstandingly successful event in consumer-appeal and a classically successful instance of advertising acumen. That, to be sure, may have been among its objectives. But it cannot realistically have been its expectation, and its overtures were mournful.

Both *The Uses of Literacy* and *Culture and Society* are pervaded by a sense of sorrowful nostalgia for a lost Europe when socialism once looked like a reasonable hope for intelligent men. These are sad, backward-looking books, obsessed with the "residual values" of a dying system of belief and with the daunting task, after the collapse of high hopes, of saving something or other from a doctrinal wreck. Either could have served as well as an epitaph on the Old Left as a clarion-call to the New. Publishers and authors alike are said to have been taken unawares by their success. The current of intellectual socialist revivalism was running stronger and deeper than anyone then guessed, and it was about to be propelled faster and harder still by events themselves.

> "There is not much enthusiasm abroad among intellectuals in our time [wrote one of the contributors to *Out of Apathy* in 1960, in sorrowing vein] for the day when the last king will be strangled with the entrails of the last priest."[3]

That sentence would not have been possible five or ten years later. In 1960, ideology was widely supposed to be dead, a victim of a triumphant consumer-society, and the drum-beats of the 1930s were thought forever stilled by the final and unforgivable Soviet apostasy at Budapest. The men of 1960 were building on a ruin, and knew it. And yet the ruin proved a foundation, after all, and on it they built.

WHO WERE THEY? The evidence is not yet available to draw more than a sketch of the principal sages of the New Left in the England of the 1960s. But a social comparison with the only other generation of British literary Marxists—Auden, Day Lewis, Spender, Isherwood and their contemporaries in the '30s—could prove enlightening.

The literary Marxist of the 1930s was born in the first decade of the century of professional parents, and his education was almost always public school and Oxford or Cambridge. The New Left sage, by contrast, was born in the second decade or soon after, most often between the peace of 1918 and the General Strike of 1926.

Christopher Hill, who in 1965 became Master of Balliol, falls somewhat outside this pattern: he was born in 1912, which means that he was easily old enough to share in the political enthusiasms of the Spanish Civil War in 1936; he is a between-generations man.

Richard Hoggart was born in 1918, Raymond Williams in 1921, Edward Thompson in 1924. Their parentage, as a group, is usually assumed to have been "working-class"; this is not always true, but it remains true that it was socially below that of the typical '30s intellectual. Hill is the son of a Methodist grocer in York, and attended St Peter's School there, and then Balliol. Hoggart is the son of poor parents in Leeds who died when he was young, according to his own minutely circumstantial account in *The Uses of Literacy*; he attended local schools and (in 1936) the University of Leeds. In 1939 he was accepted to read English at Cambridge, but was diverted by the War, in which he served as an officer.

Raymond Williams was the son of a Monmouthshire railway signalman: he attended Abergavenny Grammar School (a Henry VIII foundation and at that time one of the few voluntary-aided schools in Wales) and then Trinity College, Cambridge, after which he too served as an officer in the War, returning later to complete his Cambridge degree.

Edward Thompson, though younger than these, has an upbringing more like that of the older

[2] Kenneth Tynan, *Curtains* (London, 1961) p. 390.
[3] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Out of Apathy* (London, 1960) p. 195.

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generation of Marxist intellectuals. His father had been a Methodist missionary in India who returned to England in 1923, resigned his ministry and lived near Oxford, speaking and writing in favour of Indian independence. Like his brother Frank, who was an active Communist until his death among the Bulgarian partisans in 1944,[4] Edward Thompson was schooled at Winchester; he went from there to Cambridge to read history, joined the Communist Party as an undergraduate in 1942, went to war, finished his degree after the War and worked on a Yugoslav railway before the Stalin-Tito split of 1948.

THE PATTERN OF BEHAVIOUR grows still clearer in adulthood, and it is an academic pattern.

Hill became a Fellow of Balliol in 1938, after brief periods at All Souls (1934) and University College, Cardiff (1936). Hoggart, his War service over, became a staff tutor at Hull (1946–59) and later taught at the Universities of Leicester (1959-62) and Birmingham (1962-70), becoming an Assistant Director of UNESCO in Paris in 1970. Williams, who completed his degree at Cambridge after the War, joined the Oxford University Extra-Mural Department in 1946 and became a lecturer in English at Cambridge in 1961, and later a professor and Faculty chairman. Thompson was an extra-mural lecturer at Leeds from 1948 to 1965 and later a Reader in History at the new University of Warwick, from which he soon resigned to write *Warwick University Ltd* (1970), an attack on the industrial connections of the new foundation and a defence of the student occupation of the Registry in February 1970 to examine its "secret files."

The pattern is more than academic. It shows a marked tendency towards authorship and public appearance rather than the routine of teaching, and above all a profound attraction towards the mass media. Hoggart served on the Pilkington Committee on Broadcasting in 1960–62 which advocated a bigger role for the public sector in television against commercial interests; Williams edited the *May Day Manifesto* (1967, revised and enlarged 1968), drafted by a group first meeting in the summer of 1966. The university is often the base for activity, but rarely the activity itself, and the sage does not confine his energies to his own students when he has a whole nation to teach. Egalitarianism is a political ideal, but it has nothing to do with private behaviour. The career of the New Left sage is marked by a consciousness of success and a quietly affluent life-style.

A FAINT YET SELF-CONSCIOUS AMBIGUITY hangs over his social origins. A published conversation between Hoggart and Williams in the first number of the *New Left Review* (Jan–Feb 1960) touches on the matter with understandable delicacy. The article, which is entitled "Working Class Attitudes", records an exchange at what, surprisingly, was the first meeting between the two men, in August 1959, or a year or two after their most notable books had appeared. It begins: "I'm glad that at last we've managed to meet." Together they fix the composition of *The Uses of Literacy* and *Culture and Society* in the early-to-mid-1950s, that doldrum of intellectual socialism, and carefully establish that neither book owes anything to the other. No sage can publicly afford to be a disciple too. The conversation labours the theme of working-class origins. "We both came from working-class families", one of them remarks, and they compare village Wales and suburban Leeds.

The ambiguity lies in the situation. When a successful man emphasises the humility of his origins, he necessarily emphasises how far he has climbed, and how open the system was that enabled him to do so. The system cannot have been so oppressive, then; but if it wasn't, protest is so much the harder to justify. "Most of us didn't regard ourselves as poor", one of them remarks, reporting that his father's wage was two pounds and more a week. Does that imply "*—and we were not*" or " . . . *but really we were*"? Both men seem to sense the shadings and gradings of English social life and the inadequacy of terms like "working class" and "middle class" to meet the realities of British life; but that question is too subversive of conventional socialism to be pursued.

A similar ambiguity surrounds the relationship of most of the sages to the Communist Party. In the case of Hill and Thompson, the matter is clear in outline: they joined in youth, in the 1930s or early in the Second World War, and left in 1956–7 with the Soviet invasion of Hungary. What is unclear is why that invasion mattered so much to them. The Soviet invasion of Poland in September 1939 had been condoned or supported, after all, and of Finland and the Baltic states soon

[4] See William Frank Thompson, *There is a Spirit in Europe: A Memoir*, edited by his father and brother (London, 1947), a posthumous collection.

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after. The Hitler-Stalin pact of August 1939 failed to outrage; but the restoration of Communist dictatorship in Hungary was enough to shatter the allegiance of a lifetime. Had the facts changed, or had they—or had both?

Christopher Hill's speech of resignation to the Easter Congress of the British Communist Party does not clearly answer this question, and its very obscurity may be significant.

> "We have been living in a world of illusions [he told his party comrades]. That is why the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Union and [the 1956 invasion of] Hungary came as such a shock. We had not been prepared for these events by our leaders. We have lived in a smug little world of our own invention."

That makes Hill sound like a simple dupe, which is unlikely, and an implausibly gullible one. Why should a Fellow of Balliol wait for his opinions to be prepared for him by his Party leaders? But the rest of his statement is in any case hardly compatible with a claim to honest ignorance:

> "Some of us, including myself, have a grave responsibility for having hushed up some of the things we knew."[5]

So he knew something was wrong, and prevented others from knowing it. But if he knew, why did he wait?

THE CASES OF Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams are more mysterious: they are at once less well documented and harder to interpret. There is no clear evidence that Hoggart ever had connections with official Communism, and only a little that he held fashionable Popular Front views in 1936–38, when he was studying English at Leeds. There is a letter in the university magazine which is probably his, calling on the Church to make of Christianity a revolutionary youth movement:

> "Far from shunning such things as politics and economics, it must lead the way to the new conception of its faith and doctrine embracing and setting the true values on all such things. The modern situation has no use for the outworn theology of yesterday. It needs a new fiery faith, offering both spiritual and material content. . . ."

and the Church must realise that Christianity is "a revolutionary, nay, a Communistic", faith.[6] It would be surprising if he remained altogether untouched by the Marxist enthusiasm of the late 1930s. But what counted for more were the novels of D. H. Lawrence, then widely imagined to have been the chief, almost the only, representative of the proletarian spirit in English letters, and the style and elegance of his Leeds professor Bonamy Dobrée. The early documentation, in any case, is too thin to allow for more than guessing.

The other instance is better documented. On 23 January 1940 Williams supported Will Gallacher, the Communist Member of Parliament, against a motion at the Cambridge Union which condemned the Soviet Union for "its recent unprovoked attack upon Finland", with Gallacher insisting that all things were justified in the Soviet cause:

> "It was a principle of international law that small states unable to defend themselves or to preserve their neutrality might be invaded. The Soviet Union was opening up a great vista of a brave new world, which could, however, only come into being—as could all revolutionary changes—with the accompaniment of pain and labour."[7]

Shortly after, on 27 February, the Union held a debate on the freedom of the press, in which Williams complained that all British newspapers except the *Daily Worker* expressed the same view, and attacked the capitalistic control of the press. He "proved himself to be the most convincing exponent of Communist doctrines at present among the members of the House, and his speech had at least the merit of sincerity"[8], as the report ran. On 12 March, the day Finland announced her surrender to the Soviet Union and the cession of one tenth of her territory, a "*Hands Off Russia*" banner was raised in the Cambridge Union, and the chamber carried a motion "*That this house views with disapproval the sending of any military aid to Finland.*"

It is equally clear, however, that by the end of the war, or soon after, Williams had abandoned his Communist allegiance. His short-lived periodicals *The Critic* (1947) and *Politics and Letters* (1947–8), which ran only to a few numbers, collapsing for lack of funds, were strenuously Leavisite in the old Cambridge-English tradition, but decidedly un-Stalinist in their politics, and even offered the hospitality of their columns to George Orwell. *Scrutiny* and the cult of T. S. Eliot seem to have pushed Moscow out in his last year or two as a Cambridge

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[5] *The Times* (23 April 1957).
[6] *The Gryphon* (University of Leeds, February 1937). The letter is dated 26 January 1937, when Hoggart was an 18-year-old freshman, and is signed "H.R.H.", which may stand for Herbert Richard Hoggart.
[7] *Cambridge Review* (26 January 1940).
[8] *Cambridge Review* (1 March 1940).

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undergraduate. *Culture and Society* was written in the early-to-mid-1950s, its Conclusion being penned during the Suez-Hungary crisis of October 1956; and it represents a barely hopeful attempt to recover from the English tradition of radical literature between William Cobbett and the Fabians a native faith worthy to supplant a corrupted Stalinism. It is a very socialist book, and in some ways a Marxist one, but plainly not a party manifesto. "The only thing that matters", he wrote a few years later, "is the reality of Socialism", calling for a revival of Marxism based on "a recovery of something like its whole tradition." Even so, a youthful enthusiasm for Stalinism still looked worth justifying, though in oblique and apologetic terms. In the Thirties, he wrote in 1961,

> "Fascism had little to offer but terror. . . . Soviet Communism, on the other hand, not only carried through the industrial revolution necessary in a backward country, but, much more crucially, carried through a cultural revolution which is not only an absolute human gain but which seems, still, in its achievements and its weaknesses alike, a specific product of a particular system."[9]

This is nearly identical in substance, though not in style, with the official Soviet position about the Stalinist years which has prevailed since Khrushchev's famous speech to the XXth Party Congress in 1956. It does not, in itself, provide much evidence of any departure from the Party line, though there is other evidence for that. The Soviet example was still to be admired, with reservations, as late as 1961, and still to be blessed: "It is difficult in the end to argue that the kind of society being created there is a negation of what is usually understood as the Marxist ideal." This is a tightrope-walk of an argument, and the balance is perilous. Marx was wrong (Williams goes on to concede) in his prediction that industrial states would pass through capitalism to socialism, since socialist revolutions have in the event mainly occurred in backward and rural societies; that is not "the way the world is going." But what Marxism has to say about imperialism "seems to me to make better sense than any other version of this now commanding issue", and peasant revolutions in China and Cuba are to be justified as "an organic development of Marxism rather than a mere contradiction or abandonment of Marx."

So Marx was right if his assertions are reinterpreted in a Pickwickian sense. Often, in reading the sages of the New Left, one is reminded of the theological ingenuities of Christian modernism: not "Honest to God", now, but "Honest to Marx."

THE PROXIMITY OF ALL THIS to the official Party line, first Soviet and later Chinese, often passes unnoticed; and even when it is noticed it is often understated.

Two assumptions are too easily accepted about the New Left: that it was not a Communist movement, and that it was not so much Marxist as *marxisant*. These assumptions may be true of many of its disciples; but they are not plainly true of its leaders. Of course, if "Communist" means of the Party, then it is easy to show that the New Left was independent of the Party, and even that it was at times a thorn in its flesh. It is not clear, however, that this is a sufficient reason for denying its essential orthodoxy. On Soviet home policy, apart from the treatment of dissidents, on Soviet foreign policy before 1956, and on ideological questions generally, there have been few enough disagreements. The New Left never demanded the end of the one-party state in Russia. The monolithic political system created by Lenin after October 1917 was never brought into question by its debates in the 1960s, and the name of Lenin himself in those days stood beyond all possibility of criticism. The *May Day Manifesto* of 1967–8 backs Soviet foreign policy before Budapest to the hilt. During the Cold War, it argued,

> "Russia was portrayed [by the West] as an aggressive Imperialist power, subverting western states by promoting revolutionary activities within their borders, while threatening them with the might of a fully mobilized and victorious Red Army. . . . This account had never been true, even from the beginning. For the popular resistance movements in occupied Europe during the Second World War can be seen as agencies of Soviet imperialism only by the most grotesque historical distortion. They constituted authentic popular movements, with authentic revolutionary aspirations. . . . Far from giving overt and covert support to these movements in the immediate post-war period, Stalin was careful to withhold support from all revolutionary movements in western or southern Europe when these might conflict with the agreements as to spheres of great-power influence entered into at Yalta."
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> (*Pelican* ed., p 86)

Stalin is seen as the righteously injured party, cautious even to excess. The Greek resistance received "neither aid nor encouragement from the Soviet Union" in 1945, and Stalin only

[9] Raymond Williams, "The Future of Marxism", *Twentieth Century* (July 1961).

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reluctantly accepted Tito's assumption of power in 1945 and Mao's in 1949. Did Stalin repress opposition in Eastern Europe? Then this was "in some part a consequence of the siege mentality and political degeneration occasioned by western pressure. "The Berlin Blockade was caused by American encouragement of "Western German resurgence." This account, it is true, is followed by a brief reference to "the idiocies and crimes of Stalin's last years." But that remark cannot be taken to refer to his more massive exterminations, since these occurred in the 1930s and '40s. Indeed Williams is on record elsewhere as not always (or consistently) opposed to that. "I remember feeling, in the late 1930s", he wrote in 1961,

> "when political terror was being used both in the Soviet Union and in Nazi Germany, how much strength there seemed to be in the argument that these were really the same kinds of society; the new kind of totalitarian state. But I eventually rejected this conclusion then, and still reject it now."

This was on the ground already quoted: that, unlike Fascism, Soviet Communism had "not only carried through the industrial revolution necessary in a backward country" but a cultural revolution too. This suggests that mass-terror and extermination can be justified, in this system of belief, provided the industrial and cultural rewards are sufficiently high. It also confirms that ignorance of the Terror was not a condition of intellectual Stalinism in the 1930s.[10]

THERE IS NO GRAVE DIFFICULTY in identifying this position. It is a sort of latter-day Stalinism with a gloss of cultural analysis. Even the word "democratic" is used in a classic party sense: United States aid to Greece, according to the *May Day Manifesto*, "had served to bolster a series of corrupt and anti-democratic régimes" between 1946 and 1958. So Greece, in this use of language, was not a democracy in the 1950s. The purity of these doctrines, in the chemical sense of the word, cannot seriously be doubted. This was once the Soviet line; and by the 1960s had become, more characteristically, the Peking line.

IT IS NOT USUALLY noticed, moreover that the heroes of the New Left were frequently members of a Communist Party. Lenin must stand first in line. He was the god of the New Left, and it would be hard to find any fundamental disparagement of his life or works in any document of the school before the appearance of the first part of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* in 1974. More Party men follow in the canon of New-Left saints: Mao Tse-Tung; Ho Chi-Minh, (whose first syllable, shouted thrice, became the slogan of street-demonstrations); Che Guevara; Angela Davis (a member of the American Communist Party); Jimmy Reid of Clydeside (a member of the British C.P.); and Pablo Neruda (of the Chilean C.P., eventually Allende's ambassador in Paris). Set these names together, and the alleged independence of the New Left from the Party becomes at once hard to sustain and essential to qualify.

In the fragmentation of official Communism that occurred after the Hungarian invasion and the Sino-Soviet split of the early 1960s, the New Left looks rather like an intellectual fraction representing the Peking view in a nation where official Communism is almost entirely for Moscow. What is more, the New Left always believed in old-style socialism at home. In its domestic policies it was New only in the sense of being a revival of the Old. In its relations with the Labour Party it was strenuously anti-revisionist, fiercely loyal to the total state-nationalisation of Clause Four, and fearful of any attempt to reinterpret socialism by any greater toleration for the principles of market economics or a questioning of 19th-century orthodoxies like the class war. Anyone who suggested that modern capitalism was ceasing to be "class-structured" could always depend on a rap on the knuckles from the New Left. In domestic affairs it was diehard socialist.

> "Our task is urgent [wrote Norman Birnbaum in the foreword to *Out of Apathy*]. Influential sections of the Labour movement have proposed the abandonment of further experiments with common ownership—and therewith, the abandonment of socialism—just when the successes of the Soviet Union foreshadow large political gains for the Communist parties in western Europe."

Gaitskellism, it was resolved, shall not pass.

In its canon of heroes, then, and in much of its policy, the New Left was strenuously anti-revisionist. But this leads to a puzzle. For in one respect, at least, it always claimed to be revisionist. It was eager to back de-Stalinisation in the Soviet Union; indeed *Out of Apathy* complained that not enough had yet been done in that direction. The Raymond Williams article of 1961 condemns extermination as a political weapon,

[10] See my previous study, "Were the Intellectuals Duped?", ENCOUNTER (December 1973).

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in retrospect, and fully accepts that it was an essential aspect of Stalin's Russia. The *New Left Review* in 1974 sympathetically reviewed the first volume of *The Gulag Archipelago* in an article of conspicuous humanity. The New Left was both for and against political violence. That is not necessarily a contradiction: it may, after all, imply an important moral discrimination. The question needs to be enlarged upon.

PERHAPS THE BEST APPROACH would be to list those acts of socialist violence which the New Left approved in its heyday in the 1960s, those it failed to condemn, and those which it unreservedly condemned.

Socialist violence openly approved included the overthrow by a minority party of the Russian Provisional Government in October 1917; of the ensuing Civil War and Lenin's extermination of his enemies, the occupation of Eastern Europe by the Red Army in 1944–5 and the destruction of Social-Democratic and other non-Communist elements there; Hanoi's "War of Liberation" against South Viet Nam in the 1960s; and a wide variety of guerrilla actions scattered around the world, including Guevara's campaign in Bolivia, the Provisional IRA (with growing reservations), and the Palestinian struggle. (The last two were only dubiously socialist, it is true, but many thought them to be so.)

Violence not condemned, even in retrospect, includes: the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland in 1939 and later of parts of Finland and all of the Baltic States; the Chinese conquest of Tibet in 1951; and the enormous if ill-documented exterminations conducted by the Chinese Communists after achieving power in 1949 (said, in some estimates, to have totalled tens of millions).

Acts of socialist violence which were condemned make a shorter list. I know of three: Stalin's exterminations in the Thirties and after: the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956; and of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Why were these last three events excluded from the ideological approval of the New Left? The answer is not clearly offered in any New Left document I have seen; and so I propose some possible solutions in a tentative vein.

1. All three acts—Stalin's exterminations, Budapest, Prague—were committed by the Soviet state. If the New Left was essentially a Maoist fragment in rebellion against a pro-Soviet British Communist Party, then these positions look self-consistent and even natural.

2. All three acts were committed against other socialists. This proposition is very doubtfully true, but it was fully accepted by the New Left. Stalin's purge of the late 1930s was of "Old Bolsheviks", among others: and a loyal Leninist might indeed have cause to resent it. And it was readily assumed, and often proclaimed, that the Hungarians and Czechs were seeking their own "roads to socialism." Nobody, on the other hand, imagined in 1951 that the Tibetans were socialists.

3. All three were acts committed by the obviously strong against the obviously weak. If it is right to suppose that the youthful idealism of the New Left was not merely rhetorical, then an instinctive reaction of horror as the Russian tanks rolled into Prague must count for something. That reaction was common to almost the whole of British, and indeed Western, opinion in 1968: it would be surprising if the New Left were untouched by it. Their idealism was surely and in some sense real, if selective: it was for Chinese invasions and against Soviet invasions.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES and the street demonstrations, the New Left was always and emphatically a movement of lofty intellectual pretension. Its language was laboriously polysyllabic, its obsessions intensely abstracted. This was a world of dizzying extremes. A vast, schizophrenic gap separated its two hemispheres: one a sort of political equivalent of soccer hooliganism, disrupting universities or shouting "*Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh*!" to a line of policemen in a swaying mob; the other the earnest and subdued atmosphere of the *groupuscule*, solemnly debating in a bedsitter the sociology of thought or the theory of structures-of-feeling in companionable or fissiparous coteries.

That life was no more schizophrenic, it may be argued, than that of an Eton schoolboy who divides his day between mathematics or Greek verse and football. With the New Left, however, work and play were reversed. For the schoolboy, Greek is work and football is play. But in the intellectual progress of Marxism since World War II, it is ideas that are toys, albeit in the most solemn of games; it is in physical action like a demo or guerrilla violence that reality ultimately exists. Ideas are what keep you happy, more or less, while the world waits for revolution. Sartre, even in his existentialist days, always insisted that the ultimate truth lay in revolution and that the propositions of philosophy were

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worthy of attention only as intellectual diversions while one stood and waited. The metaphysic of the New Left, in a similar way, was a plaything to keep the faithful occupied. That is why it would be mistaken to regard the decline of intellectual Marxism in the 1970s as a lasting fact, just as it is now obvious that it was mistaken to have regarded its decline in the 1950s in that sense. It can re-emerge when the world situation encourages it to do so. And its ideal conditions for re-emergence would be similar to those of the Viet Nam War, when an international Communist interest can be made to coincide with a popular campaign at home.

SOME OF THESE METAPHYSICAL TOYS, however, deserve a brief dissection.

The sages of the New Left were deeply committed to the analysis of contemporary culture.[11] On the most immediate and practical level, this amounted to a preoccupation with the mass media, as in Hoggart's part in the Pilkington Report or Williams's study *Communications* (1962). Hoggart's collection of essays, *Speaking to Each Other* (1970), sums up this preoccupation in its very title, though he belongs to the mildest, most pragmatic, and most literary extreme of the movement. His views are marked by a distaste for private ownership and advertising and a veneration for state monopoly which the socialist mind traditionally, if inexplicably, associates with liberation. The state, in this view, though already by far the biggest capitalist, ought to be bigger still; and though the BBC already predominates in broadcasting, it ought to dominate altogether. It was one of the curiosities of this revolutionary movement that it thought big capital should be bigger still, and cultural power concentrated even more efficiently than it is.

The preoccupation with culture was itself intensely historical. A Victorian emphasis was altogether intelligible, since socialism is a Victorian doctrine. It amounted to a return, often a nostalgic one, to the roots of ideology, to an age when its scriptures were first composed and when history itself seemed to be about to fulfil the Marxist prediction of class war in the new industrial states of Europe.

Some of its jargon is readily identifiable. "*Social*", in the historical prose of the New Left sages, as in R. H. Tawney's before them, commonly means almost nothing at all: it is a term of art that can be removed from many of their sentences without loss of sense; but then if you believe that all reality is social, or have once believed it, that is only to be expected. (More recently the word "societal" has been adopted to fill the gap left by the devaluation of "social" itself.) "*Central*", too, is a key-word in such prose. Its origins lie in Matthew Arnold and in the *Scrutiny* of the 1930s and 1940s, where it became a cult-word to applaud a familiar Cambridge species of moral edification through literary education. But in New Left prose it continued to mean "on our side", so that the writings of Carlyle, Ruskin, and Morris might be called "central" in a way that Tennyson and Meredith were not. A minute stylistic critique of New Left prose in the 1960s would be largely unrewarding: it was bad prose, fat with syntactical excess and suspicious of clarity. But it was a prose in the last degree academic, and its badness was always cap-and-gowned: not merely polysyllabic but laborious in syntax and intensely abstract in terminology. Much of it looks as if it had been recently and imperfectly translated from a German academic treatise of the nineteenth century. Perhaps the most extravagant instances relate to the criticism of films, which in that context was invariably called "film." Even the liveliest of 20th-century popular arts could be reduced through the rhetoric of the New Left to the obscurity of a German forest.[12]

The cultural analysis of the Victorians, being based on an exclusive reading of favoured texts, flourished in an indifference to historical research. This is the richest area of fantasy in the mythology of the New Left, and facts of history were rarely allowed to violate it. Britain's Industrial Revolution of the 19th century was seen as an age of triumphant *laissez-faire*, in spite of the Factory Acts; an heroic working class was invented to oppose a capitalism red in tooth and claw; and a band of courageous thinkers and writers were glorified for speaking the truth in defiance of a Parliament that represented only the hypocrisy of a possessing class and seldom heeded the cry of hunger. The New Left sage, rightly enough, saw himself as the natural successor to the Victorian social critics. He was above all a moralist, like them; and his concern for historical realities was no greater than Carlyle's or Ruskin's.

[11] See Anthony Quinton's essay on "Critical Theory: The Frankfurt School", ENCOUNTER, (October 1974).

[12] See for instance Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* (London, 1969, revised 1972); and *Working Papers on the Cinema: Sociology and Semiology* (London, 1969), edited by Wollen for the British Film Institute.

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SOME OF THE MASTER-MYTHS of the New Left were vividly at odds with one another; and its own sense of mounting epistemological confusion began to weaken its cohesion and confidence even before the Sixties were out. Social conditioning was among the most agonising. Marx had held that mankind is subject to the conditioning of social circumstance, but equally that (as he put it in the *Third Thesis on Feuerbach*) "circumstances are changed precisely by men." In his modern disciples, this conflict grew none the easier through debate. Man is a master; but he is also a slave. He can choose to be or to achieve anything ("*Soyez réaliste: demandez l'impossible*"); but he is also the victim of social pressure. Subjected to his conditioning, he yet retains the power to rise above it. So his subjection cannot have been total. But where, if it is not total, does it begin and end? How, within such a ruthlessly deterministic system, did a handful of enlightened spirits manage to lift themselves by their own bootstraps?

The sociology of thought cultivated by the New Left was a massively reductive system; and in the end it was to sink under the weight of its own increasing subjectivism. Its struggle for survival paradoxically depended on excluding itself from its own system. Conditioning, like "structures of feeling", is essentially what other people are supposed to have. Just as few socialists imagine that the doctrine of equality applies to themselves, so none supposes that his own political convictions are the result of social pressures similar to those he observes working upon others. There can be few Marxist intellectuals who suppose themselves to be Marxist because social conditioning made them so. Every individual, surely, to the extent that his belief is serious, believes that he thinks as he does because what he thinks is true. That, in principle, is an entirely acceptable assumption. But what are we to say to the man who tells us, in effect: "I am a Marxist because Marxism is true; but you are a liberal because, nurtured in an outmoded bourgeois parliamentary state. . . ."

Sometimes the answer to this sort of thing is clear and simple. It happens that my own upbringing was in the 1930s in an atmosphere more or less "Popular-Front." So it cannot be true that I believe what I do because of conditioning, if "conditioning" means early intellectual influence. If it includes the total social and economic system as well, then the case, as a matter of ordinary observation, is still weak: most young Poles, Czechs and Yugoslavs, when free to talk, express an indifference to Marxism that often borders on contempt or hatred. On grounds of observation, the sociology of thought pursued by the New Left always looked implausible. Anyone can reasonably claim exemption from it, even those who affect to believe it. And to claim that exemption is the only reasonable course: it is a liberty one might be proud to claim and to avow.

IT WAS AN ATTENDANT ASSUMPTION in this argument that the truth of a proposition is weakened or destroyed by demonstrating, or claiming to demonstrate, that it was based on social conditioning. This is a surprising assumption. Suppose, to put the matter at its simplest, that I believe X for no reason but that I was brought up to believe it. This is doubtless a highly inadequate reason for believing it. But it is also a highly inadequate reason for rejecting it. The truth-content of X remains whatever it is. Even if it were true, which I doubt, that one only prefers the Parliamentary system to One-Party Socialism because of upbringing, the case for Parliamentarianism is neither the better nor the worse for that—or, for that matter, the case for supposing that two plus two equals four. The truth of a proposition is independent of the factors which cause it to be believed or disbelieved.

THE NEW LEFT WAS WIDELY ACCEPTED as a youth movement. In its leadership, at least, it was never that. At the climax of its short-lived success, in 1968–9, its literary leaders in England were aged between their mid-forties and their mid-fifties. They were already everything implied by the word middle-aged.

One may wonder if, in intellectual history, there ever was such a thing as a youth movement. The young copy: they do not invent. The Children's Crusade was not initiated by children. In Hitler Youth rallies, middle-aged men with bare knees marched out in front. And in universities in the 1960s the protest-movement was not merely captured by such men: it was their intellectual creation from the start. They wrote the books and articles, gave the lectures and edited the journals, and demonstrated in Grosvenor Square. More than one former student militant has since revealed that he knew nothing

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of organised protest until he reached a university and heard it in a lecture. Enthusiasm, once kindled, might pass from student to student; but it was not invented by a student. Even the leadership of our political parties was a contributory influence here. Many wondered when, in the late 1960s, the shy, demure student of the earlier years turned into a jargon-stuffed oaf screaming abuse and obscenities. But in 1963–5 two political parties elected middle-aged leaders publicly praised for a virtue called "abrasiveness." Some of our parliamentary life, before the New Left was born, had already turned into a public model that was harsh and crude.

The middle-aged men who made and led the New Left, however, were often content to leave abrasiveness to their disciples. In England, at least, the sage at his most characteristic was bland. His literary tone was as far from the revolutionary as the artifices of style could render it. Edward Thompson, in a review of Raymond Williams's *The Long Revolution* (1961), wittily imagined the book to have been written by "an elderly gentlewoman and near-relative of Mr [T. S.] Eliot, so distinguished as to have become an institution: The Tradition. There she sits, with that white starched affair on her head, knitting definitions . . . —and in her presence *how one must watch one's* LANGUAGE!", and he appositely quoted Orwell on the revolutionary:

> "Not merely while but by fighting the bourgeoisie, he became a bourgeois himself."[13]

Since the death of D. H. Lawrence in 1930, these are almost the first literary intellectuals in England to seek to embody the fading myth of a revolutionary proletariat. Like Lawrence in his later years, they consistently exaggerated the humility of their origins, or allowed them to be exaggerated. Their parentage was sometimes humble, but rarely of the humblest; their education was always better than average, and often much better; and they all entered universities and prospered there years before the Butler Education Act of 1944. They later attained rank and affluence. Their self-pity ought not to be easily indulged. Early in *The Uses of Literacy* Hoggart, in answer to his question "Who Are the Working Classes?", estimates the normal weekly wage of those he describes at 1954 prices; and though I have never thought of myself as working-class, I can well remember living on less than half that figure for years. The myth of deprivation is a highly implausible myth. Many millions of their compatriots in the 1930s and 1940s were poorer than these men.

IN THE IDEOLOGICAL CONTROVERSIES of the 1960s, especially inside universities, the sage took up a vantage-point of tactical interest. It is a position hard to define: perhaps it might best be called the Extreme Right of the Extreme Left. The middle-aged academic, watching his fading Marxist convictions almost miraculously revived by an unexpected turn of history, suddenly found himself no longer a mere survivor of the 1930s but a possible centre of attention. Who in the '50s could have guessed that the young of the '60s, eager for a sense of community, would think they had found it in Victorian socialism or a vanishing sub-culture of our industrial life? Pastoralism was stronger than we dreamt.

But the situation must have had its unnerving aspects. The new acolytes were a surprising species: they were not the children of the Jarrow hunger-marchers but of prosperous parents. Sir Geoffrey Jackson has remarked of his imprisonment by Tupamaro guerrillas in Uruguay that his kidnappers all seemed to him upper-middle-class, or his social superiors in origin. The sage was hardly a prisoner like the ambassador, and his emotions must have been, for the most part, more consoling: a sudden joy at finding oneself taken seriously by the young; a gush of pride at being accepted by those who were themselves socially so acceptable; and a sudden discovery that a social origin once felt to be uninteresting if not positively embarrassing might, in a new atmosphere, be turned to an undreamt-of account.

Such sages are as remote as imagination can conceive from the hairy revolutionaries they contrived for a time to lead. They were well-to-do, and wished to be more so; they were at least as anxious for academic promotion as most of their colleagues, and usually attained it; they found it more than acceptable, in reviewing the books of other men, to drop the titles of their own in casual references; their life-style was at least moderately affluent. They were seen to care, not less than most, for silver on the table, a big car, and Mediterranean holidays. "It is one of the consolations of middle-aged reformers,"

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[13] *New Left Review* (May-June 1961). Cf his review of Williams, *The Country and the City*, in *New York Review of Books* (6 February 1975), which again complains about a lack of crispness and the burden of a "portentous" style.

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as Saki once remarked, "that the good they inculcate must live after them if it is to live at all." Above all, they were infatuated with the manners of upper-class life. "I remember," wrote Richard Hoggart of his old professor at Leeds, "being struck right away by his style"—his military phrases, his tweeds and pipe-tobacco, and his mannered voice; the professor became a "substitute father" for him, teaching him how to employ an "upper-class intellectual's directness" and to drink gin.

All this bespeaks what might be called the soft eiderdown of English life: its eagerness to accept rebels and absorb them, its lack of barriers (though never of distinctions), and its notorious capacity to transform the potential revolutionary into a pillar of establishment. The New Left sage was an Establishment Revolutionary. A pillar was what he wanted to become, and in England at least he usually succeeded.

But the ambiguity of his situation remained: that he continued to claim and to exercise a right to condemn the system that rewarded him handsomely and provided him with the free press and broadcasting system through which to condemn it. If the established press is capitalist-controlled, why did it print him? Because, no doubt, our press-barons are all eiderdowns too, and know what to do with intellectual revolutionaries. The sage, in short, held revolutionary views, or at least enjoyed the reputation of holding them, without performing any revolutionary function. It was in that sense that he stood on the Right of the Left. It was a tactical position, and carefully chosen. Not for him the pathetic fate of the ageing Theodor Adorno of Frankfurt, complaining that he had intended in his lectures and writings only a theoretical methodology: "How was I to know that they would try to realise it with Molotov cocktails?" In English universities there were no Molotov cocktails, and blood-violence largely remained a threat.

The sage maintained order. He could attend a demonstration partly in order to be seen, partly to ensure that few or no windows were broken. He might sit on a militant committee, but persuade it not to burn down the faculty building because a consultative committee was about to be set up, or because it had already been set up but had not yet reported. He would insist on courses and programmes on Communications, Film, Victorian Social Criticism, and the Theory of Revolution without being actively in favour of classes or programmes of a contrary vein being broken up; but if they were broken up, he might be against punishing the wreckers, and on grounds that inevitably included the word victimisation.

His position called for agility. But it proved, in the short run, indispensable. In any compromise arising out of crisis, the sage had to be there. His claim to speak for the young might not be totally accepted; but he often spoke for some of them, and those the most committed. On the other hand, he spoke to them as well as for them, and could be counted on to dissuade them from the excesses of extremism. He was not an arsonist, or a murderer, or even an assailant, though infinitely understanding of the motives of those who were. In all these ways, at least, the New Left was indeed new. It was a system of belief rather than of action. Unlike the Old Left of the 1930s it did not belong to international Communism. It had no formal organisation, only the shifting and shiftless world of *groupuscules* sensitive to political unorthodoxy and suspicious of any leader. It had no promised land, as the Old Left had the Russia that Lenin and Stalin made. Its violence, though at times visible, was self-expressive and served no purpose evident to the politically informed.

This was the uneasy kingdom of middle-aged men of letters whose real taste was for leisured talk and a quiet life. The world may mock the pretensions of those who, having supported in youth the greatest act of mass-murder in European history, could set up in maturity as the moral exemplars of a whole generation. But no man, unless the most envious, need begrudge them the good fortune they won.

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George Feaver

The True Adventure

Epilogue to "The American Indian"

HAVRE, MONTANA *(AP)—"They were headed for Wounded Knee when they left", their mother said. "But it will be Wounded Butt when they get back."*

An uncomfortably warm reception awaits two Wisconsin kids who left home by train to join the Indians. They might have made it all the way to Seattle too, if they hadn't insisted on building a tepee in the observation car.

Douglas Morgan, 10, and his 9-year-old brother William, told authorities here that when they left their Milwaukee home on Sunday equipped with Indian headdresses, a tom-tom, home-made spear, bow and arrow, and about 60 cents, they wanted to be adopted into a tribe.

The boys successfully hopped an Amtrac train headed West, but they missed connections to the South Dakota Indian country. Their 1,300-mile journey came to an end in Montana when they began waving their spear and trying to build a tent in an Amtrac car.

That's where they got shot down in this northern Montana community; and there wasn't an Indian in sight.

"It was just like a Huckleberry Finn deal", said conductor Lee Grant, who discovered the youths trying to turn the passenger car into their own Indian settlement.

"They were going to join the Indians and when that didn't work they decided to go to Disney-world. They were just dreaming and rolling along all the while. They had no conception of how far away from home they were."

NEWS ITEM (26 February 1974)

AMERICANS, AS THE TOUCHING adventure of Douglas and William Morgan suggests, have never quite got over the passing of the frontier. The boys' story had the added poignancy that it appeared in the national press, as a human interest story, just a day short of a year since AIM, with no less initial ebullience than that now displayed by the youthful Morgans, had descended in the night and begun their ill-fated occupation of Wounded Knee.[1] There was, to be sure, an important difference in the two cases. The youngsters were drawn to Wounded Knee by no more than the pointless abandon of a youthfully innocent view of the world. The lure of the same place for their adult AIM counterparts constituted a more desperate, even though no less naïve yearning—for the realisation in modern America of the millenarian dream of Wovoka's Ghost Dance religion, when red-skinned saviours would eliminate the white tyrant and replace his with the politically more authentic voice of an American Indian ethnarchy.

Will "Red Power" be sustained as one of the leading civil rights causes of the 1970s? Or will it, like the "Year of Europe", be seen in retrospect as one of the passing victims of the Watergate scandal? The thoughtful answer to such questions will be wisely equivocal. For an affirmative response to the first must be tempered by a recognition of the patent lack of coordination of effort and of unanimity amongst moderate, traditional and militant Indian factional interests. And a ready "yes" to the second must be offset by an appreciation of the extent to which AIM's tactics in the BIA and Wounded Knee occupations, while drawing attention to the plight of the American Indian, may actually have helped to undercut the well-intentioned inter-racial efforts at reform of recent years. Oglala Sioux tribal president Richard Wilson's impassioned opposition—"The only Indian problem is AIM. . . . They're just bums trying to get their braids and mugs in the press"—serves to illustrate both points.[2] And at any rate, it seems reasonably clear in retrospect that as far as AIM is concerned, its theatrical brand of "revolutionary alchemy"[3] was leading only to frustration and failure.

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[1] It is worth noting that AIM's Russell Means and Dennis Banks in early February 1974 called for AIM supporters to gather again at Wounded Knee to observe the first anniversary of the takeover on 27 February 1973. Tribal president Richard Wilson promised to "break it up" should they try, vowing "there [will] be no more Wounded Knees."

[2] See Terri Schultz, "Bamboozle Me Not At Wounded Knee: The Making of a Media Event that Had Everything But the Truth", *Harper's* (June 1973), pp. 46–56. The article is a devastating chronicle of "the put-on of Red Power" at Wounded Knee: "The story of Wounded Knee II had everything: the pathos of cruel injustice, the heroism of bold rebellion, the mystic chords of America's myths and memories. All it lacked was truth, a minor failing of major 'news' coverage. In truth, Wounded Knee II was largely a pseudo-event to which the world press responded with all the cautiousness of sharks scenting blood."

[3] The metaphor is Marx's. His review of A. Chenu's *The Conspirators* (Paris, 1850) is cited in David McLellan, *The Thought of Karl Marx* (1971), p. 206.

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It was not only AIM's leading Indian antagonist Richard Wilson who had been led steadily to this conclusion. There was perhaps a certain sweet irony in the fact that no less a *bona fide* progressive than Senator George McGovern, the very architect of the new democratic politics of quotas, eventually arrived at a similar point of view. AIM's leaders, he asserted in September 1973, were "a group of rip-off artists who are exploiting the Indian problem for their own selfish needs." In a statement made in Huron, South Dakota, McGovern exclaimed:

> "They are violent lawbreakers and claim to be operating in the tradition of Martin Luther King. But Dr King would turn over in his grave if he could see people claiming to be carrying on his tradition with automatic rifles."[4]

He spoke in the wake of a continuing internecine AIM power struggle in the months following the Wounded Knee occupation. Clyde Bellecourt was shot and critically wounded on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, reportedly by a group associated with AIM president Carter Camp. Shortly afterwards Pedro Bissonette, a prominent AIM leader in the Wounded Knee takeover, sought on fugitive warrants, died resisting arrest at Pine Ridge. Four nights later two Bureau officers were shot and killed in apparent retaliation.

Thus, by the time the trial of Russell Means and Dennis Banks (charged on 10 counts of conspiracy, assaulting Federal officers, burglary and possessing explosives in connection with the Wounded Knee takeover) opened in St Paul, Minnesota, in early January of 1974, there was a certain implausibility in the defendants' broadly inclusive claim that their trial would "decide the fate of the Indian people." The assertion was only an ideological projection of their own plight. Defended by a seven-man courtroom team led by William Kunstler and Mark Lane,[5] the two best-known militants of some 130 Wounded Knee occupiers under indictment faced heavy fines and a total of 80 years imprisonment if found guilty on all counts. The month the trial opened the AIM leadership was judged and found lacking in a rather different forum—when tribal president Richard Wilson (the first incumbent since 1935 to win re-election) defeated Russell Means in a run-off to retain his post as President of the Oglala Sioux.[6]

The trial of the Wounded Knee defendants was shifted to Minnesota after the failure of an earlier attempt to hold it in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. On May Day 1974, a spectacular courtroom mêlée had occurred there. When AIM sympathisers refused to stand as Judge Joseph Bottum entered the Minnehana County Courthouse, the building was ordered cleared. A crowd of Indian sympathisers outside demonstrated their solidarity with the brethren within by throwing tyre levers, rocks, chains and bottles through windows and doors, and the courtroom itself was left in a shambles. An AP Wirephoto showed a burly Indian in the act of hurling a concrete-based parking sign through a large plate-glass window, while a terrified elderly woman spectator was led to safety. Even more seriously, as police and ambulances rushed to the scene, a state patrol car was involved in a smash-up that killed two people.

When the St Paul trial opened Judge Fred J. Nichol, estimating its duration at three to four months, advised the defendants, lawyers, newsmen and spectators to get used to the Minnesota winter. In the outcome, as the *National Review* wryly commented, "those attending the trial also had a chance to get used to the Minnesota summer."[7] The large team of skilled defence lawyers subjected government witnesses to extensive cross-examination, sometimes continuing for

[4] "McGovern Calls AIM Leadership 'Rip-off Artists' ", *UPI* (1 September 1973).

[5] According to William Clairborne ("Indians' Defence Focuses on Jury", *Washington Post*, 10 January 1974), the defence team also included sociologist Jay Schulman, a radical trial-veteran who worked with the defence in the Philip Berrigan trial; in the Camden, N.J., Selective Service office break-in case; and in the recent conspiracy trial of Viet Nam Veterans Against the War in Gainesville, Florida. Now Schulman's assignment was to compile an elaborate demographic profile of the approximately 400,000 registered voters in the St Paul area eligible for jury duty so as to ensure (as Clairborne put it) "a jury sympathetic to American Indians, in particular, and to [sic] poverty and social injustice in general."

[6] There was no clear victor in the first poll (22 January), and Wilson defeated Means in a run-off (7 February). We should, perhaps, refrain from reading too much into the actual electoral campaign. As Martin Waldron reported ("Sioux Holding Election", *New York Times*, 22 January 1974): "Judging the progress of Indian campaigning is extremely difficult for white outsiders. Although Indians have the reputation of being as intense about politics as the Irish, their campaigning is extremely low-key and barely discernible. What appeared to be a group of old men silently watching a group of frisking dogs recently was in reality a political rally. A young woman who left a college faculty two years ago to return to the Pine Ridge Reservation to enjoy 'my heritage' laughed heartily at the seeming anomaly. 'That's heavy campaigning, Indian style', she said...."

[7] "On the Left", *National Review Bulletin* (9 August 1974), p. B114.

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days. And as the case dragged on, Judge Nichol's lack of sympathy with the government cause grew steadily more evident. He permitted Banks and Means to act as co-counsel, thus enabling them to cross-examine witnesses (with Means wearing a sweatshirt bearing the message "Custer Had It Coming!"). He declared the two defendants indigents, which meant the taxpayer had to bear the brunt of the AIM leaders' huge defence costs. He accused the Justice Department of wiretapping telephones at Wounded Knee and of using paid informers. Finally, in mid-September 1974, Nichol threw out all charges against Banks and Means. According to Ian Ball, "Indian tribesmen burst into war cries" at the news. "I would like to think a new chapter had been written when we got a new President, but that is being badly blotted", Nichol told newsmen, with a dramatic disregard of judicial restraint. "Not just with the pardon of Mr Nixon, but also by the action of the Justice Department in this case."[8]

The acquittal suggested further evidence of the tragi-farcical element in the imagery and rhetoric of the Second Battle of Wounded Knee. For contrary to AIM's claims that there was a "plot" to "massacre" them, the reviled white man's judicial machinery had led to the dismissal of all charges against the leading Wounded Knee insurgents. Paradoxically, the outcome denied them the political martyrdom they sought. Complete "victory" for them meant the "utter defeat of the system", by demonstrating the racialist and oppressive nature of the white man's justice. Now, with their acquittal, the ideological vindication they sought eluded them.

THIS UNFULFILLED YEARNING in the Indian revolutionary outlook served perhaps to encourage yet another takeover. On New Year's Day 1975, an armed band of local Indians calling

[8] *Daily Telegraph*, London (18 September 1974). Judge Nichol said the chief prosecutor had deceived him about a government witness. Louis Camp, a Sioux and former AIM member, told the court he had seen Means and Banks direct rifle fire at U.S. Marshals and lead raids on shops and homes. "But his wife said he had told her the Government promised him a house and other benefits if he gave evidence." Earlier, when William Kunstler's spirited cross-examination of Camp led to courtroom demonstrations by zealous AIM supporters, the court had to be cleared with the aid of the disabling chemical Mace. Judge Nichol ordered Kunstler and Lane to be arrested, but they were later released and no charges filed.

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themselves the "Menominee Warrior Society" occupied a monastery owned by the Roman Catholic Order of Alexian Brothers at Gresham, Wisconsin, and demanded that it be turned over to them for use as an Indian health care centre.[9] Certainly there were some intriguing parallels with the earlier Wounded Knee occupation during the 34-day siege at Gresham. Like Dennis Banks and Russell Means, the self-styled Menominee leader, called *Hawpetoss*, or General Michael Sturdevant (who affected a crumpled U.S. Civil War officer's hat), vowed to newsmen that his people were "ready to die for what they believe."

As at Pine Ridge, there was a deep split between the militant occupiers and the official governing body of the local Menominees.[10] As at Wounded Knee, the National Guard was called out to deal with the insurgents, and did so by cutting off their electricity and telephone services, and by demanding that women and children inside the monastery be sent out in preparation for a showdown. Re-enacting his earlier role with lines by now well-known to himself and to his national audience, Marlon Brando arrived on the scene to join the militants and to offer his services as "a negotiator."[11] And as at Wounded Knee, the would-be revolutionaries' festive mood was never far from tragedy. Shortly before the occupation ended (with an "agreement" by the Alexian Brothers to turn over title to the $750,000, 64-room abbey to the militants for a token payment of one dollar), light-heartedness turned suddenly sour when a local farmer suffered a serious head wound as he rode a snowmobile outside the guard perimeter. There was even, as at Wounded Knee, a pointed symbolism in the name of the town-site where the occupation occurred—with unfolding events suggesting a kind of Gresham's Law of Ideologies, whereby bad political currency always drives out the good.

THE AIM STORY has not yet run its full course. Russell Means returned to Pine Ridge after his acquittal in the St Paul trial to see to unfinished business with tribal president Richard Wilson. Since then, the political situation has steadily deteriorated. Six people were killed there between January and April 1975. FBI figures for the period list some 67 assaults, including tomahawk and hammer bludgeonings. On a per-capita basis, the Pine Ridge homicide and assault rates were running at six and four times those of Chicago. According to the *New York Times*,[12] the reservation has become "a cauldron of violence, intimidation, alleged economic corruption and virulent political animosity between Russell C. Means and Richard Wilson", and is worse off in almost every way than it was before the 1973 AIM take-over of Wounded Knee.

The bitterness of the renewed rivalry between Means and Wilson led predictably to further bloodshed. It began in late February, when Means and a group of AIM supporters accompanied one of their number, Vine Marshall, to the tribal court in Pine Ridge village, where Marshall was to stand trial for a minor offence. The AIM group verbally harrassed the judge, demanding a jury trial, even though the poorly-funded tribal court had not been able for years to afford jury trials. When they left the courthouse, Wilson supporters followed their car; and shots were exchanged on the highway. Later that

[9] William E. Farrell, "A Small Indian Band Bares U.S. Area's Hidden Prejudices", *International Herald Tribune* (21 January 1975). The headline reflects an unhelpful trend in current news-reporting.

[10] Richard P. Jones, "Indians Hold Monastery, Demanding Title to It", *UPI* (3 January 1975). According to Jones' dispatch:

> "Ada Deer, who heads the Menominee Restoration Council, official governing body for the Menominees, said she had not heard of the group until Wednesday. She said she believed the group was the same one that was defeated 2–1 for control of the tribal government early last month."

[11] Brando had not been entirely out of the limelight of the Indian story since Wounded Knee.

In December 1974 the news was that Brando was giving away to the Indians 40 acres of land in California valued at $112,000. He handed over the deed to Hank Adams of the Survival of American Indians Association, with Senator John Tunney (D-Calif.) at his side, and a medicine man beating out a drum welcome. Brando said he would later also give to the Indians his $110,000 home in Los Angeles, an apartment complex in Anaheim, California, and a third of the 40-acre farm he owns with his sister in Illinois. Asked where he would live when he gave all his American lands away, Brando replied: "I'll ask the Indians if there isn't some portion of the Earth for me to stay." But a week later, John S. Hamilton Jr. of Rancho Palos Verdes, California (who holds the trust deed on the 40-acre Brando "gift" to the Indians), told the press it represented nothing more than a $318,000 debt that became due at the end of the year.

Brando, it turns out, has never made any payments on the land other than interest on the mortgage and taxes. "I think Mr Brando is doing a terrific job to bring out the plight of the American Indians", Hamilton said. "But I have talked the matter over with my brother and sister and we are just not in a position to donate the land to the Indians if the mortgage is not paid off. . . ."

[12] Grace Lichtenstein, "Legacy of Wounded Knee: Hatred, Violence and Fear", *New York Times* (22 April 1975).

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day, AIM's legal defense team, which had flown to the reservation for Marshall's hearing in a small plane, returned to their aircraft and found it riddled with shotgun pellets. When they climbed into a car to drive off the reservation they were blocked (according to AIM participant Eda Gordon of the Wounded Knee Legal Offense/Defense Committee) by several dozen Wilson supporters. A fight broke out; AIM supporters claimed they were beaten and had suffered stab wounds.

After that the violence escalated. On 28 February, a woman sympathetic to the Means faction was stabbed in the throat. On 1 March, Martin Montileaux, a Wilson man, was shot to death in Scenic, an ill-named shack town just north of the reservation boundary. The next day Means and Marshall were arrested and later charged by the state with murder.

On 4 March, shots were fired into the house of Matthew King, an AIM supporter. On 9 March William Josh Steele, a Wilson sympathiser, was killed in the outlying reservation town of Masterson. The score was equalised on 20 March when Stacy Cottier of AIM was killed in the same place. On 26 March Burgess Red Cloud was clubbed on the head with a hammer; and on the same day, Jeanette Marie Bissonette, mother of six (and sister-in-law of Pedro Bissonette, an AIM militant slain in 1973), was murdered by a sniper as she sat in her car. On 14 April Louis Camp, the AIM sympathiser who had testified against Means in St Paul, was critically wounded by a rifle shot in Wamblee, another reservation town. The same night a parent-child centre in the town of Porcupine was burned down.

A Federal grand jury which was convened to investigate these latest troubles at Pine Ridge has so far returned four indictments, all of them against AIM supporters. Government spokesmen say that further indictments will include the names of Wilson partisans.

Surveying these latest developments, Dennis Ickes, director of the Justice Department's Office of Indian Rights, has commented that "Wounded Knee '73 created a climate of hate. The damage was not so much to buildings as to the relationships among the people. It set brother against brother, family against family. . . ." But, unrepentant, Russell Means retorted in a telephone interview from the Rapid City jail (he has since been released on bail posted by Marlon Brando) that the Federal government is merely using Richard Wilson "in its strategy that began with the Puritans—divide and conquer." While acknowledging that material conditions on the reservation have actually worsened since the Wounded Knee occupation, Means declared that AIM's tactics accomplished a "major victory" by encouraging a much-needed Red Indian sense of pride: "The children are growing their hair long [he claimed], wearing sacred eagle feathers . . . I count that an immeasurable plus." Asked how an essentially backward-looking preoccupation with cultural pride could encourage political and economic progress on the reservation, he replied:

> "I don't see a really immediate change in the lifestyle on Pine Ridge. . . . But neither do the Indian people on Pine Ridge expect it. Our concept of time, which makes up part of our reason for being Indian, is that we have no concept of time."

WHERE IS guilt and innocence in history, and who apportions right and wrong? Writing in *Ramparts* Magazine in the immediate aftermath of the Wounded Knee occupation, political commentator Peter Collier had no hesitation in assigning blame for the whole affair. Alongside grim photographs (courtesy of the Nebraska State Historical Society) showing the common trench grave of the Indians

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massacred at the original Wounded Knee encounter in 1890, he noted that "[These] photographs are a terrifying summary of the long death of the Plains Indian and a testament to the demonic innocence of our national past." And he added:

> "The American Indian Movement went to Wounded Knee, however, not only because it was the most symbolic landmark on the bloody map of Indian history, but also because they felt that the place comments on what is happening now that massacres are no longer crude affairs, but achieved subtly and without bloodshed."[13]

It was a point of view that struck a responsive chord across a wide spectrum of radical opinion, encouraged perhaps by an easy association of the imagery of the Indian Wars with America's role in Viet Nam.[14] Intellectuals too, with their well-known romantic tendency to accept on principle that far-away fields are greener than their own,[15] were disposed to accept the Collier interpretation of events at face value. What was at issue, in their view, was not only the historic legacy of the actual Wounded Knee massacre of 1890, but the continuing symbolic depletion at the hands of white America of a primitive culture in some respects superior to the refined and subtle barbarism that replaced it. "Lo, the poor Indian!" they seemed to say, contrasting, with Pope, the inhumane complexity of the so-called civilisation of the modern Western world unfavourably with the noble primitivism of the Red Indian outlook.[16] But, as one writer has suggested, such romantic fantasies amount to yet a further victimisation of the Native American for purposes of expiating the white man's guilt, "a position made all the more poignant by the Indians' apparent acceptance of it and by the tendency among whites to use a supposed Indian mode of life as an instrument of revolutionary attack against their own social order."[17]

THE MOOD of such Wounded Knee revolutionaries and their red and white-skinned fellow travellers turned out on closer inspection to have been more conservative than they perhaps appreciated. Gunnar Myrdal has been especially critical of the elitism of the intellectual champions of the new tribalism, whom he characterises as "voluntary ethnics" with a craving for historical identity. Their position amounts to a kind of "upper-class intellectual romanticism" that, "like all romanticism, serves conservative and, in fact, reactionary interests."[18] As Ferdinand Mount has observed of the theatre of revolutionary politics,

> ". . . time and again we are struck by the harking back of revolutionaries to past models of revolution and their heroes; and by the way those memories are encapsulated in myth and symbol . . . instant nostalgia is in fact the particular morbidity of revolutionary circles; in no other milieu do we find such an eager longing to marmorealize the recent past."[19]

[13] Peter Collier, "Wounded Knee: The New Indian War", *Ramparts* (June 1973), p. 59.

[14] Thus, for example, according to *Parade* Magazine (20 May 1973), Collier, a former teacher of English, had made a convert to the cause of no less a radical chic figure than Jane Fonda. After reading his February 1970 *Ramparts* piece on "The Red Man's Burden" (according to *Parade*), "Miss Fonda . . . phoned Collier who offered to escort Jane to Alcatraz Island . . . which had then been seized by the Indians. Jane's involvement with the American Indians in March 1970 led her to oppose the U.S. involvement in Viet Nam, which some critics compared to our own Indian Wars of the 19th century."

[15] For a stimulating exploration of this theme, see Paul Hollander, "The Ideological Pilgrim: Looking For Utopia, Then and Now", ENCOUNTER (November 1973), pp. 3–15.

[16] ". . . *simple nature to [his] hope has giv'n,*
Behind the Cloud-topt hill, an humbler heaven,
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold."
Alexander Pope, *An Essay On Man* (1733), Epistle I

[17] Bernard W. Sheehan, "The American Indian As Victim", *The Alternative: An American Spectator* (January 1975), pp. 5–8.

[18] See Gunnar Myrdal, "The Case Against Romantic Ethnicity", *The Center Magazine* (July–August, 1974), pp. 26–30.

[19] Ferdinand Mount, *The Theatre of Politics* (1972), p. 180. Marx makes a very similar point: "The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language." The passage occurs in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852).

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The point was not lost on Professor Max Lerner, who suggested in some of his newspaper columns on the troubles that some Indians seemed intent on reinstating a red-skinned version of the rough and belligerent Jacksonian approach to interracial affairs—and at the very moment when there were hopeful signs of a renewed Jeffersonian gentleness, reasonableness, and respect for Indian culture and identity amongst informed whites. Could any simpleminded racialism ever resolve the dilemma of two diverse cultures seemingly trapped in their respective neuroses?

> "The Indians unable to come to terms wholly either with city living or reservation living, veering between self-pity and militancy; the whites feeling their guilt yet unable to be truly generous."

The solution must be, Professor Lerner concluded, a renewed commitment to provide greater Indian autonomy on the reservations while easing the path to fuller integration for those who want to take it. And with a broader perspective on the new ethnicity, Bayard Rustin has recently spoken of the need to curb its "distorted concept of competitive pluralism, in which tribal demands are encouraged, and the exploitation of ethnic feelings is sanctified."

> Those who are potential rivals are also the nucleus of a majority political movement that could offer hope to America in this period of deep crisis. It is to the building of such a movement—and not to the glorification of differences—that we should be addressing ourselves.[20]

In the very year that Frederick Jackson Turner had set out the main arguments of his frontier thesis, T. H. Huxley delivered his famous 1893 Romanes Lecture at Oxford University on "Evolution and Ethics." If Turner's work provided a sort of retrospective historiographical justification for a Social Darwinian vision of American "Manifest Destiny", played out in the clash of Indian and White cultures along the open Western frontier, Huxley's offered a timely antidote to both white-skinned and red-skinned variants of Social Darwinism. Social progress, he submitted, in language as compelling now as then, means checking the cosmic process at every step and substituting for it an ethical process. "The ethical progress of society depends, not on

[20] Bayard Rustin, "Ethnics: A New Separatism", *The American Federationist* (December 1974), pp. 8–11.

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imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it." Nowadays, as we have seen in the writings of Vine Deloria Jr., the Red Indian is proclaimed to be not a relic of the past but the wave of the future. Commentators like Howard W. Lamar, Professor of American history at Yale, have warned that the old Turnerian Social Darwinist image of the Indian has been so reversed that the American Indian is "in danger of becoming a 20th-century noble savage who has a monopoly on understanding nature." T. H. Huxley's argument is taking on a curious new relevance.[21]

FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS, the greatest names of modern social science, fascinated by the differences between traditional and modern social orders, have striven to capture the characteristic features of the two in contrasting typologies which variously depict them as status and contractual, organic and mechanical, primary and secondary, folk and urban, sacred and secular societies. In the everyday world in which we live out our lives the crooked logic of practice denies us the luxury of such neatly symmetrical classifications. Yet the psychological propensity to choose, once and for all, between the two world-views persists as we struggle to make sense of a constantly reformulated mosaic of traditional and modern images.[22] In politics the struggle lies at the very roots of the contemporary recrudescence of tribalism, ethnicity, and nationalism. "There is a phenomenon here", Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan have said, guardedly, of the remarkable rise of ethnic consciousness in the last two decades, "that is, in ways not yet explicated, no mere survival but intimately and organically bound up with major trends in modern societies."[23] Simplistic sloganeering and vaudevillian political melodrama simply fly in the face of the complexity of the phenomenon.

In the years that Vine Deloria Jr. was spending his childhood sharing the traditional Indian *ethos* at Pine Ridge Reservation, complex phenomena were in the thoughts of the novelist Thomas Wolfe as he mused about the tragic imperfections of American civilisation. "I do not think the enemy was born yesterday", he is led to remark in *You Can't Go Home Again*,

> ". . . or that we began without the enemy, and that our vision faltered, that we lost the way, and suddenly were in his camp. I think the enemy is old as Time and evil as Hell and that he has been here with us from the beginning."

Translating Wolfe's point into political idiom means that Americans, whatever their ethnic and racial origins, must come to terms with the debilitating and self-defeating sense of guilt that otherwise threatens to erode a healthy sense of pride in citizenship. Unlike the Morgan boys, they must differentiate between fancy and reality. They must learn, by outgrowing infantile adventurism, to make what is best in the legacy of an imperfect past serve the promise of a pluralistic present.

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[21] Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Varieties of Social Darwinism", in her *Victorian Minds* (1970) p. 329. There is a striking similarity of mood in the Malthusian pessimism of 19th-century Social Darwinism and the ethical premises of the new tribalism. See also on this point Jacques Barzun, *Darwin, Marx, Wagner* (1958), Chapter 5, "The Uses of Darwinism"; Howard W. Lamar, "The New Old West", *Yale Alumni Magazine* (October 1972), pp. 9–10.

[22] Robert K. Merton, in a brilliant paper, concludes a recent examination of the claims of various exclusivist epistemologies with the peroration: "Insiders and Outsiders in the domain of knowledge, unite. You have nothing to lose but your claims. You have a world of understanding to win." See Robert K. Merton, "Insiders and Outsiders: A Chapter in the Sociology of Knowledge", *American Journal of Sociology* (1972), p. 44.

[23] Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, "Why Ethnicity?", *Commentary* (October 1974), pp. 33–39.

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Column

AMERICANS HAVE an amiable propensity to self-examination and self-criticism, an urge to ask how they stand in the world and how their moral and political pretensions compare with what they take to be the realities of their own situation. They love symposia and seminars, conferences and confrontations, in which everyone can adopt a "position" in relation to each other and to whatever problem may be at issue, such as, for instance, *Viet Nam—What Now?* or *Watergate—Symptom or Syndrome?* or *The Kennedy Experience*. The characteristic feature of such questionings, conducted as they say "in depth", is that large numbers of intellectuals of superficially varying opinions, but basically similar assumptions, are invited to express their views about whatever particular subject has been chosen for debate, in the implicit or explicit hope that at the end of it all everyone concerned will retire with renewed assurance that Good will triumph over Evil, even if in the meanwhile the distinction between them has become even more confused than it was before.

We don't go in for this sort of thing much in England, and it might be the better if we did. Of course, we have our formal mock battles on television or in Sunday supplements in which completely predictable figures like Lords Soper and Hailsham, The Muggeridge, the Jays (*père et fils*), the Longfords (*père et fille*) utter completely predictable sentiments about whatever topic is under discussion, it doesn't matter much which, but on the whole everyone takes it for granted that this is simply a matter of filling up available time and space as cheaply as possible. In America things are different. There, at any particular moment, rich and powerful foundations, universities, learned academies, television stations, newspapers, publishing houses, are energetically rounding up intellectuals from every state in the Union to contribute to a public debate which all consider of importance and all hope and believe will justify the very large expenditure of public and private funds which such activities involve.

It would be difficult to suggest any final explanation of this difference in national attitudes. But in the case of the United States it would, I think, be relevant to mention the persistent influence of Puritanism, with its meticulous examination of the personal conscience and the relationship between man and his Maker; the doubts which have haunted almost every great American writer about what it means to be an American; the great war between the States which raised the question of national identity in a more acute form than any other great nation has both confronted and survived; perhaps, even, the warm and almost universal welcome extended by Americans to the theory and practice of psychoanalysis, and its insistence that mental and even physical health can only be bought at the cost of ruthlessly exposing the most intimate secrets of the psyche.

These are after all peculiarly American phenomena, and perhaps they may help a little to explain why Americans are more prone to self-questioning and self-criticism than any other people except those on whom they are forcibly imposed by dictatorial governments. The difference between the American style of self-criticism and, say, the Chinese or the Russian is that in the first case it is the product of an honest and spontaneous attempt at mental hygiene, which we might do well to admire and imitate, even if we wonder what its effects may be on a people's self-confidence; in the second, it is simply one of the many techniques by which a dictatorship tries to destroy the personal identity of anyone who might be thought to be dangerous to the state. As for us, perhaps we do not ask questions about ourselves today because we are afraid of what the answers might be.

★

I AM DRIVEN to such reflections by a reading of the July issue of our distinguished contemporary, *Commentary* magazine. Apart from a few pages of reviews, it is devoted entirely to the answers given by a splendidly representative list of contributors to a circular letter addressed to them by the magazine and reprinted as an introduction to, and explanation of, this symposium. The editors say:

> Fifteen years ago, the ruling elements of American society were convinced that the United States was on the whole a good society and a desirable model for others to follow. Today we find evidence of an increasing disposition among the élites—political, cultural and even commercial—to question the legitimacy of American civilization. Instead of stressing the virtues of an industrialized liberal democracy, as they were once so readily prepared to do, they now tend to dwell upon its failings, and sometimes even to acquiesce in the most hostile descriptions of the country's character, its past record, and its future prospects.

The editors go on to ask whether this critical attitude is

> an expression, as some think, of an adjustment to hopeful new international realities like *détente* and interdependence; or are we, as Solzhenitsyn and others believe, witnessing a resurgence of the "spirit of Munich"? Is the United States exhibiting

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a new maturity in its international behaviour; or is the country suffering from a failure of nerve and a loss of political will?

These are certainly difficult questions, and *Commentary*'s contributors have provided a wide variety of answers to them. Yet even to ask them is in itself a kind of answer; it implies a fundamental doubt about whether "the state of the nation" is a healthy one, and this is itself a kind of admission that it is not. When we are well we do not ask whether we are in good health; it is only when we are sick that we begin to wonder if something might be wrong with us. And on the whole this is the general impression one takes away from this symposium; qualified, however, by the certainty of the contributors to it that, however ailing the society to which they belong, they themselves are in excellent condition and in tip-top shape to deliver an impartial and dispassionate judgment on it. Reading some of their diagnoses of the ills with which America is afflicted, one can hardly refrain from crying out: *Physician, heal thyself!* but it hardly occurs to any of them that they may be a part of the disease they seek to cure.

This is curious because, in seeking to identify and analyse America's failings, so many of the contributors have little doubt where the guilt lies. "It may well be", says Peter L. Berger, "that a querulously ailing Uncle Sam, almost two hundred years old, is ready to fill the gap left by the Sick Old Man on the Bosporus", and if this is so, he thinks, the fault lies very largely with "the *soi-disant* intelligentsia, who generally control what may be called the media-educational complex", and have used their power to blind the American people to the political realities of contemporary life, of which one is "a world context dominated by a miscellany of aggressive and successful totalitarian régimes of whatever ideological coloration."

Zbigniew Brzezinski is equally certain of the guilt of the "media-educational complex";

> Given the fact that our society has become increasingly subject to cultural influences emanating from the intellectual and mass-media communities, it behooves those circles more than any other group in society to reflect responsibly on the consequences of a pessimism that is ultimately nihilistic.

He identifies some of the ways in which these influences have manifested themselves recently:

> There is, indeed, something sick about the competition among our mass media to expose—and thus to nullify—American intelligence efforts to gain more precise knowledge of Soviet strategic hardware; there is certainly something reminiscent of the 1930s in the rash of film and television "documentaries" glorifying the totalitarian régimes of the Left; there is something highly destructive in the persistent campaign to link the Kennedy assassination with the C.I.A. (but why not with Castro or the K.G.B.?). All of that is part of a self-hate syndrome that has become very evident within those circles of a society which most directly set the tone of the written or the spoken words destined for mass consumption.

The "media-educational complex", then, appears to have displaced the "industrial-military complex" as the scapegoat for America's ills, and it is easy to understand why, if this is indeed so, it should give so much cause for alarm. What puzzles one is why *Commentary*'s contributors should, in condemning it, also see themselves as outside it, and indeed as in radical opposition to it. Peter Berger is Professor of Sociology at Rutgers and Brzezinskiis Professor of Government at Columbia; I cannot think of any satisfying definition of the "media-educational complex" which does not make room for them, or the institutions which they adorn (or indeed for *Commentary* itself); one might as well exclude Mr Henry Ford from the industrial-military complex. The "media-educational complex" would certainly include the television and radio and newspaper industries; but it would equally certainly also include the schools and universities, and the mass audience to which it appeals is largely composed of those millions of American students who attend universities in order to learn from, and be influenced by teachers like Professors Berger and Brzezinski.

HOW IS IT THAT they, and others like them occupying so prominent a position in the "media-cultural complex", should have allowed control of it to have slipped, as it were, out of their hands, and into the hands of those whose influence they regard as so pernicious? It it that the universities themselves have become corrupted and that their students, who supply the intellectual labour force of the mass-media industries, lack the moral and spiritual resources to resist the kind of pressures to which these industries are exposed; or rather, have already been conditioned to yield to them, willingly and gladly? This is one of the questions to which I wish *Commentary*'s contributors had addressed themselves, for today the universities occupy so crucial a position in American life that no enquiry into the state of the nation could be in any kind of way complete which did not take account of it. Most of them, however, are so concerned with the mote in other men's eyes that they have no time for the beam in their own.

One is all the more grateful, therefore, for the contribution of Seymour Martin Lipset who tries to see the role of the intellectual in American life in a slightly less parochial context than most of his fellow contributors. In his view, the self-doubt and self-questioning which afflict America at the

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present time is only one aspect of a phenomenon which affects not only the United States but western society as a whole. "Western society", he writes, "is facing an internal crisis of morale linked to the emergence of a classic intelligentsia." By a "classic intelligentsia" he means "a political category comprising members of the élite who opposed the régime of their own societies", such as existed in the 19th century in Czarist Russia and Central Europe, and in this century in the underdeveloped and colonial worlds, but up to World War II was missing in the culturally and economically developed nations. "In such countries, college students, the scions of the affluent classes, were preponderantly conservative or right-wing. In the United States opinion polls up to the 1950s suggested that the large majority of the well-educated and of college students were Republicans. In Europe, students backed the bourgeois parties or, in periods of crisis, rightist movements."

Since then, however, things have changed. After World War II "an intelligentsia began to appear, based on the university-educated, which resembled in its alienated outlook the intelligentsia of pre-1917 Eastern Europe." Despite the resemblance, however, there was also a significant difference between the pre-World War I intelligentsia of Eastern Europe and the post-World War II intelligentsia of the United States, and of western society as a whole. The first was a strictly limited class, and for that reason found it impossible to exercise any effective political influence; the second, because of the immense expansion of university education and the increasingly important part which its products play in the processes of production, is itself a mass movement. The alienated élite of the 19th century lived on the fringe of society; the alienated élite of today occupies a central position in it.

> The new intelligentsia is an outgrowth of conditions in post-industrial society which made a mass phenomenon of the educated class, the producers of knowledge and culture and their followers in the upper rungs of the tertiary sector of the economy, those involved in communications, in the application of scientific technology, in welfare related activities.

Nevertheless, the new intelligentsia rejects the values of the society in which it is so centrally ensconced just as firmly as the old intelligentsia rejected the values of theirs. Professor Lipset quotes Daniel Bell: the "new class, which dominates the media and the culture [has developed] values centred on 'personal freedom' [which] are profoundly anti-bourgeois." And equally, Lionel Trilling, writing in an entirely different context: "any historian of the modern age will take virtually for granted the adversary intention, the actual subversive intention that characterises modern writing."

IS THE NEW INTELLIGENTSIA, then, the Fifth Column, ensconced, like General Mola's in Madrid, in the very citadel of contemporary western society, which, with its "adversary intention, the actual subversive intention", frustrates and confounds every attempt to defend the city and is prepared at any moment to surrender it to the barbarians at the gates. Professor Lipset quotes from a mass of evidence which tends to show that this is in fact the case, and, even more significantly, that it is at General Headquarters that the Fifth Column is most firmly entrenched. Of academics, it would seem, it is precisely the most successful and influential who are likely to be most critical of existing institutions, and of universities, it is the most highly regarded in which such views find their most receptive audience. Of newspapers or broadcasting media, it is the most prestigious in which "the adversary intention, the actual subversive intention" is most evident. In government and industry it is the professional group, "now a majority of those in the $15,000 and up group" and "more beholden to their outside [academic] discipline . . . than to the particular company they are working for", which has "taken over the views of the intellectual community", while conservative attitudes are found among those in "line executive capacities", or those earning less than $5000 a year who are the most conservative of all.

I do not know what *Commentary* made of the answers it received to its questions; I must confess that Professor Lipset's scared the pants off me. *R*

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The Pragmatic Wisdom of Sidney Hook

By Lewis S. Feuer

DURING THE LAST HALF-CENTURY, Sidney Hook writes, he has been led "time and again to rethink my basic commitment to the pragmatic philosophy", but on only one point has he been led to "acknowledge a lacuna or difficulty" resolved neither by the pragmatic philosophers nor by those of other schools.

> "All of us assumed too easily that the achievement of intellectual conviction carried with it the moral courage to act upon it. Unfortunately, this has not been the case, especially in recent years."

That courage Hook has shown all his life. Indeed, while other American philosophers reduced it to the status of an academic exercise, he has made it the substance of his life. He has given a moral stature to the last fifty years of American intellectual history because he has always, even when he erred, spoken with an independence of mind; never the creature of fashions and vogues, never resorting to strategic silence to evade hostile opinion, he has always been reason's yeoman.

Hook's new book *Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life* is his wisest.[1] When some day the standard books of proverbs and maxims are augmented for revised editions, the sayings of Sidney Hook will, I am sure, provide a host of new luminous entries.

> "Some philosophers belittle man by asking him to look at the immensities without; others belittle him by asking him to look at the perversities and selfishness within."

> "Tolerance always has limits—it cannot tolerate what is itself actively intolerant."

> "The Munichmen of the spirit are at work again."

> "We suffer from too little thinking rather than from too much."

Wisdom perhaps follows the ages of prophecy, enthusiasm, and ideology. Hook indeed was the first philosopher to expound and advocate Marxism in learned journals. During the 1930s he tried in several notable books to give a scientific coherence to Marxist tenets. But *Toward the Understanding of Karl Marx* (1933) and *From Hegel to Marx* (1936) were not accepted into the Marxist canon because scientific coherence was the last thing which the Soviet curia of the Communist Party desired. Hook became the staunch American critic of the fraudulent Moscow trials (1936–38), the extirpation of millions of persons in the Stalinist programme, with its abrogation of individual rights and democratic process, its suppression of free thought, its collaboration with the Nazis, and monolithic promulgation of ideological myths. A century earlier John Stuart Mill analysed the writings of Auguste Comte and the Saint-Simonians and outgrew them as he perceived the despotism that was latent in their schemes. Thus too Hook in his books of the 1940s, *The Hero in History* (1943) and *Reason, Social Myths, and Democracy* (1940), surmounted Marxism.

Now, after a lifetime of political experience, he has collected for us his maturest reflections on philosophy and social theory. They are the culmination of those essays and reviews which filled pages in *The New Republic, The Nation, The Modern Monthly*, and the folios of obscure socialist papers and student journals. The prose has mellowed, the polemical tones have grown gentler. The leftist intellectuals naturally still retain their dislike for Sidney Hook. They can never forgive him for having been "prematurely right", they resent his having preserved his rationality because it reminds them of their own subservience and capitulation. That resentment against Sidney Hook has transmitted itself from the Old Left to the New. How strange that the responses which the Party Commissars instilled into their fellow-travellers should survive into a third generation! But Hook tirelessly continues on platforms, panels, and podia to argue and debate. The leader during these last years of the

[1] *Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life*. By SIDNEY HOOK. Basic Books, $12.50.

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University Centers for Rational Alternatives, he has rallied American scholars against the new library-burners who, being in possession of Mao's *Book of Quotations* or Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, have no need for other books. Now he is embattled with the Washington administrators of "affirmative action" who would impose a *numerus clausus* of race and sex to justify a discrimination against the more talented in science and scholarship.

THOUGH HOOK DESCRIBES himself as a pragmatist, I think he does so largely out of personal loyalty to his teacher John Dewey. For few of the distinctive tenets of pragmatism remain in his philosophy. He doubts that Dewey was right in holding that all ideas are plans of action, and he would eschew the notion, dear to the pragmatists, that "all problems are necessarily soluble." Where for Dewey it was disequilibria of the environment which posed man's problems, Hook regards man as a problem-seeking animal, "a risk-seeking and risk-enjoying creature." Hook has absorbed much of psychoanalytical theory with his philosophy; he rightly conjoins Freud with Locke in the history of liberalism, and looks to "modern psychology" to help us return to "the secular rationalism of the Enlightenment." By exposing the false values that can "conceal our real commitments", it undermines the "paranoiac theory of truth." The rationalism of his earlier teacher, Morris Raphael Cohen, has become dominant in Hook's thought as the Deweyan strain has become recessive. Time and again it is Morris Cohen's metaphors and modes of argument which hover in his essays.

Hook calls himself a "naturalistic Pelagian." If Reinhold Niebuhr was a latter-day Augustine, John Dewey was his Pelagius; and Hook resumes this role in debate with Paul Tillich, Eliseo Vivas, and Michael Polanyi. He rebukes those who would trace the evils of communism to a consequential chain arising from the premises of liberalism.

> "It would be as difficult to derive the operational code of Bolshevik-Leninism from the philosophy of Thomas Jefferson as from the writings of prophetic Judaism or Christianity."

I find myself at this juncture parting company with Sidney Hook. For in ideology, it seems to me, almost everything is possible. From their Fabian premises Sidney and Beatrice Webb were able to derive their blessing for the Bolshevik party, while Harold J. Laski, the theorist of political pluralism, wrote in his *Faith, Reason and Civilization* (1944) an encomium for the Bolshevik ideology as unrestrained as any written during the Second World War. To those who see moral nihilism as a consequence of Enlightenment philosophy, Hook replies: "Nihilism is a complete *non sequitur* from the premises of secular rationalism." But surely, the proposition in question is more a psychological than a logical one. Why do many of the new generation of Soviet intellectuals move toward a return to religion? It does seem to be the case that when a people is brought up on the notion that ethics (in Marx's words) is "ideological nonsense" and that human individuals are basically collocations of atomic particles, that the world is without God—then a sense of emptiness, of meaninglessness, will pervade its causal lines. Perhaps "all claims to discover the meaning or mystery of life rest on logical confusions", as Hook argues; but the feeling that such a meaning exists will be experienced even when what that meaning is cannot be demonstrated. Nihilism is the counterpart of the vacuity that a child experiences when it is told of the transience of its existence.

HOOK HOLDS that the fear of death, exaggerated as he thinks it is, is largely the outcome of cultural influences. If naturalism makes for apathy and

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vacuity, he asks, how then does one account for the fact that the value-blind naturalists have been in the thick and almost always in the lead of "the struggle"? Whether there is any such convincing correlation we may, however, find doubtful. In the history of naturalism, such proponents as Lucretius, Hobbes, and Santayana were scarcely activists of "struggle" (and on a more popular level, America's most famous atheist propagandist, Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, waged his biggest struggle to make James G. Blaine of Maine the Republican President of the United States). Hook argues that "the language of religion" makes for "a mode of acceptance and resignation to the world as we find it", thereby dissipating "the mood of social change and reform." To which one must counter-observe that the same mood of acceptance will be found among philosophic naturalists and naturalistic sociologists such as Vilfredo Pareto, William Graham Sumner, and Sir James Fitzjames Stephen. On the other hand, it was precisely America's idealistic transcendentalists, Emerson, Dana, Higginson, who were the militant ideologists of the Anti-Slavery movement. Hook has small respect for those who require "the beaming countenance of a cosmic confidence man." There is a gusto to his language which reminds me warmly of the speeches I used to hear on Manhattan's Columbus Circle many years ago from the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism. That society seems to have vanished, perhaps because atheism has so vanquished its opponents that in refuting a theologian such as Paul Tillich, Hook feels that it is "like punching an eiderdown or fencing with a ghost."

Hook, however, has little sympathy for that variety of atheism called Existentialism. He speaks of the "unwisdom of the existentialist furore at the discovery that man is not immortal." Wasn't this "furore", however, precisely the outcome of the discovery by many ideologists that their commitment had been in large part a defence-mechanism against the strains of a death-anxiety? Hook, in his Lucretian vein, argues that political tyrannies find the fear of death a useful ally. But it is also the case that a strong cultural conditioning against death-fears can be used to make a people more subservient. Devotion to the State is then proffered as an all-satisfying goal and substitute-immortality; automatically almost everybody in the Soviet society suffers from feelings of guilt since nobody finds this secular immortality satisfying. And this guilt of socialist pessimism, the Soviet equivalent of original sin, does seem to provide a lever for making the citizens more malleable to the state authority.

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THE GREAT POLITICAL NOVELS of Arthur Koestler and Ignazio Silone were indeed philosophical documents against naturalism. Rubashov in *Darkness at Noon* discovered that the self is more than a "grammatical convenience", that it is linked somehow to infinite spirit. Pietro Spina in *Bread and Wine* found that the human personality held membership in the idealistic kingdom of ends.

Hook argues tellingly that such ethical insights are fully articulated in the pragmatic notion which

> "defines the good as that which I choose after reflection or as that which fulfils most completely basic needs and desires."

The old familiar problem, however, then recurs. For if Adolf Hitler were to aver that power and cruelty were his most basic needs, and indeed that after reflection he had consciously chosen these values, he too might enroll himself as a pragmatic naturalist. Or are we to say that he had a neuroticised misperception of his basic needs? But what if aggression and sadism are imprinted more indelibly in the genetic codes of some persons? Underlying the revival of philosophic idealism is the feeling that unless the good has a transcendental status over and above the satisfactions of human beings we shall not be able to explicate our ethical intuitions.

THERE IS A RICHNESS OF PERCEPTION in Hook's discussions of ethical values, beginning with one essay in this book which was published in the '30s, the probing analysis of Nicolai Hartmann's ethical values. Hook has grasped the conception inherent in the Wisdom tradition since Aristotle and *Ecclesiastes*—that the nature of ethical values is antinomous—that "any virtue unqualified, given free rein, culminates in vice." Thus truthfulness and loyalty can lead consequentially to treason and chauvinism, and love and justice are likewise rational only when they are in a polar, complementary relationship.

> "True ethical value is always a synthesis of opposed elements."

Those who fasten on a monistic ethical absolute are engaged in "unconscious hypostases of secret preferences or fantastic wishes." The fanatic, according to Hook, is a person willing to sacrifice for one supreme end all the other ends of life. Hook's analysis suggests a further inquiry into the fanatic's unconscious.

Leninists like to repeat their adage: "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs" (or eggheads). After a while, you begin to realise that they are far more interested in the experience of breaking eggs than in making the omelette. In other words, the "supreme end" of the fanatic may only be the apparent one, the rationalisation on the manifest level, which camouflages the latent underlying dominant end, never publicly avowed. Because Stalin, for instance, wanted cruelty and dictatorship, he chose his particular methods of collectivisation and industrialisation; the latter corresponded less to economic necessity than to his sadistic drives. It is the duplicity which he practises about his supreme end that is the key to the fanatic rather than his alleged ethical monism.

THE KEYNOTE of philosophic tradition was uttered by Socrates in the *Phaedo:* "For is not philosophy the study of death?" Hook, on the contrary, regards this death-emphasis as a calamity for philosophy. He denies indeed its centrality to the meaning of tragedy:

> "Is not death the ultimate source of whatever is tragic in life? I cannot bring myself to think so."

The agonising over death strikes him "as one of the unloveliest features of the intellectual life of our philosophic times. . . ." And with a barb for the Existentialists he asks "why those who are nauseated by life . . . should be so fearful of death." The tragic sense of life, according to Hook, arises rather from the fact that in every moral problem there is a conflict between good and good, or right and good, and that the resolving of every problem entails the sacrifice of some good. The tragedy of the self lies in "the selves we might have been." All our choices are confronted by the silent reminders of values we rejected.

Apart, however, from the experience of children at the discovery of death, the immense record of the world's literature tells of the primacy of death in the meaning of tragedy. And the most memorable passages in Hook's book are those on the "inescapable evanescence of value", and his conclusion (in accord with Peirce's tychism) that

> "all things in the world, all values and ideas, embodied in human institutions, sooner or later break down. . . . There is a point at which every system will fail us. There is always a moment when friendship falters. . . . Whatever our virtue, it will some day be found wanting."

What is common to all the usages of tragedy is the sense of nullification—the values sacrificed, the life lost. But though many persons say that they do not regret their choices in life, and are therefore (in Hook's sense) not tragic figures, every child, whatever its parental system of social conditioning, is horrified by the idea of death. The secular rationalist may try to cushion this impact of nullity; nevertheless, the greater the child's capacity for love, the more despairing will it feel. Life then seems meaningless in the sense

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that this is a defeat which is total. Dylan Thomas uttered the defiance: "*And death shall have no dominion*", but lived in death-fear; while the streaks of cruelty which characterised Bertrand Russell and Morris R. Cohen, Hook's teacher, arose in part evidently from their not successful attempts to repress or sublimate their death anxiety. If death were not a fact, processes and choices might indeed be reversible; the irreversible ones pronounce the partial deaths that we sustain. When Hook writes of the Russian failure as "the greatest tragedy in all history", it is chiefly because of the deaths, total and partial, that it brought upon whole generations, classes, and nations.

THERE IS A HEALTHY, vigorous and contagious faith in life in Hook's writing, and Spinoza would welcome him as blessed, as among free men who think of nothing less than death. Hook has the optimism to suggest an enterprising social survey to ascertain how people feel when they look back on their lives.

If such a survey could achieve honest self-reportage, its results might be startling. Mark Twain once thought of writing a novel on a similar theme. Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer, both sixty years of age, meet again after not having seen each other for a long while; they mourn old times, and decide that their lives have been failures: "They die together." Fortunately, Twain never wrote the novel; it would have cast darkness upon the joy the world has had from the adventures of Tom and Huck.

The Deweyan standpoint with regard to such ultimate and metaphysical issues was to translate them into sociological ones. It has always been doubtful whether these renditions were translations or mistranslations, that is, devices for repressing metaphysical problems. In his early writings, Hook worked to fulfil the Deweyan programme. With regard to the problem of the freedom of the will, he wrote, for instance: "A choice is free when it is informed, *i.e.*, when it knows the consequences of its acts." And further: "A naturalist might say that the whole discussion about freedom of the will is unimportant." Many persons will feel however that their being fully informed does not affect the question as to whether their decisions are determined or free. A fully informed man is not necessarily a free one. The question of the freedom of the will was certainly an important factor in John Stuart Mill's mental collapse, Bertrand Russell's brooding upon suicide, and William James's struggle with neurosis.

Perhaps a healthy person, with an unimpaired capacity for repression, can house such insoluble problems more readily in his unconscious. If so, however, must we then not alter our philosophy?

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For, instead of seeking full self-consciousness and making conscious the unconscious, should not wisdom recognise that the unconscious is a necessary counterweight in life's balance? The naturalist philosophy, however, stands or falls by its ability to deal with the problem of the freedom of the will.

THE STURDY TEMPORALISM that pervades Hook's writings will be congenial to most people. I happen to be an old student of A. O. Lovejoy, and its clear-sightedness delights me. But the argument for an anti-temporal aspect to reality, in ultimate symmetry with the temporal, may have a significance greater than is commonly realised. Few persons seem, for instance, to have studied closely the scientific argument which Kurt Gödel, the great mathematical logician, has advanced for the unreality of time. Albert Einstein wrote that he too had been troubled by the existence of time-negating solutions to the equations of general relativity but had then cancelled them as lacking physical reality. Do they point, however, to an anti-temporal aspect of reality? Bergson used to warn that the intellect would tend to spatialise duration; perhaps this is what it does, but validly so. Such considerations have nothing to do with the Platonic arguments for timeless universals or Eternal Ideas of the Table or Chair, for they pertain to particular, individual objects in their anti-temporal aspect.

THE CHARACTER OF JOHN DEWEY, America's foremost teacher of temporalistic pragmatism, is delineated in an essay of Hook's memories which will endure as a classic in the history of philosophy. Its narrative of the animosity between Dewey and Russell, "the man whom Dewey personally disliked most", is more than a story of personal grudges; it becomes a corollary of a conflict of social worlds.

According to Hook, what Dewey resented most was Russell's describing pragmatism as "a form of vulgar commercialism." The dislike was first kindled when the two men met in China after the First World War. Russell enjoyed flaunting his unwed pregnant secretary before the Christian missionaries. Dewey felt

> "there was a streak of cruelty in Russell and an aristocratic disdain for the sensibilities of other human beings outside of his class. . . . Russell's animus against Dewey followed his awareness of Dewey's coldness."

Underlying this whole episode, we might add, was Russell's anti-Americanism, an invariant constituent of his emotional-intellectual history. When Russell found fault, for instance, with the Soviet Communists in 1919, it was on the ground

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that they were trying to "Americanise" Russian society! Shortly afterward Russell was competing with Dewey for the allegiance of the Chinese students of the May Fourth movement. One such student, (later a distinguished philologist at Berkeley) who served as an interpreter for both men's lectures, told me that Dewey's character and advocacy of scientific method in ethics and politics made a deeper impression than Russell's rather abstruse lectures on mathematical logic. Actually Dewey's philosophy was not essentially different from that of Mill, H. G. Wells, or Julian Huxley, none of whom Russell charged with being philosophic spokesmen of capitalism and commerce.

Even before the two men met in China, Russell (in January 1919) had published a harsh and sardonic criticism of Dewey's philosophy. Dewey's "habit of making everything subservient to practice", wrote Russell, "removes most of the incentives to practice of a really noble kind." The world of Dewey's instrumentalism was one of trains-running-on-time, and man-made advertisements which blotted out the sun and stars. Some of Dewey's arguments, he felt, were "so easily answered that I feel he must have found my views extraordinarily distasteful or he would never have made objections with so little cogency." And, moreover (according to Russell), the pragmatists buttressed their weak logic by insinuating that if you disagreed with them,

> "you are suffering from the 'genteel tradition', you belong to an 'upper' class given to a detached and parasitic life."

An American psychology was warping their philosophic vision and logic. For Dewey's philosophy was stamped with "democratic philanthropy" and an "instinctive belief in the omnipotence of Man" natural to a young prosperous country where men's problems were simpler than those in Europe. Russell added condescendingly that he derived "a good-natured malicious pleasure" in translating such theories as Dewey's ("conceived by those who hate mathematical logic"), into terms "repugnant to their own parents", and then confuting them. It was "a shameful motive", he conceded, but it was plain that he regarded Dewey as a lumbering, confused representative of an intellectually backward people.[2] Dewey, son of a Vermont grocer, and thirteen years older than Russell, felt all the more confirmed that the scion of an aristocratic leisure class was hostile to experimental method and democratic effort. This was a controversy

[2] Bertrand Russell, "Professor Dewey's 'Essays in Experimental Logic'", *The Journal of Philosophy* (2 January 1919).

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which was needlessly exacerbated by social and personal antipathies. Russell's anti-Americanism was a discreditable ingredient in his life, and scarcely sat well with his perpetual recourse to American universities and the U.S. lecture public to replenish his finances. Hook writes that "Russell was always greedy when it came to money." Russell liked to be paid as well as possible, but it was also true that he was singularly generous in contributing to help sundry persons and causes.

Perhaps the whole lesson of this episode in the history of ideas is that philosophy should beware of being assimilated into ideology. That personal and social circumstances affect the formation of philosophies is doubtless true; but whether the causal circumstances are as elementary as "genteel tradition" or "youthful" commercialism is doubtful. The cyclical movements of philosophical ideas and the spectrum of human characters are far more decisive in the choice of standpoint.

AFTER MANY YEARS of reflection, Sidney Hook departs from Dewey's philosophy in two basic respects. He finds a basic difference between the quest for truth and the quest for good; and second, as we have seen, he now recognises that moral courage is not necessarily bred by the pragmatic philosophy or any other. As far as truth and good are concerned, Hook holds that an asymmetry characterises their relations. While in the search for good, we accept the better and reject the lesser good, in the search for truth, that proposition which is rejected as false does not contain a lesser truth. To which one might enter the objection that in scientific work we do look for "truer" statements which then supersede those "lesser truths" which still remain valid for more limited, qualified domains of cases. And as for those particular observational statements in science that are either true or false, they have their analogues as far as the good is concerned in reports on emotional experiences.

Far more significant is Hook's affirmation of the role of courage. A strange new problem appears on Hook's agenda. Hitherto the intellectuals have been regarded, or regarded themselves, as the conscience of the community. Now comes an awareness that cowardice and fashion-following, herd-bellowing, jealousy, and dictator-directedness can characterise the various echelons of the intellectuals: "this is a problem that requires further exploration."

MEANWHILE, Hook with the example of his own personal courage has rallied the isolated, sometimes demoralised, professors in the scattered American universities to assert

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themselves to preserve their mission of rationality.[3] It is vivifying to see this man, now in his seventies, at meetings, always alert, untiring in his demonstration of the logical fallacies of enthusiastic cliché-mongers half his age, never losing his spontaneity or good cheer.

Curiously he finds himself perforce compelled to argue with new irrationalists who have been twisting John Dewey's phrases to their purposes. He indicts practices which are degrading academic institutions—the numerous colleges in which the curricula now aim at a wide variety of "life experiences" instead of sustained work in the humanities, in the natural and social sciences. He criticises as well the countervailing tendency toward a vocationalism, a pre-professional orientation in higher education. He feels also that the consequences of the "unrestricted elective system" which followed in the wake of student power have debased academic values. The deflation of "course content" and the inflation of generous grading are symptoms of a decline of educational standards which might herald the "death of cultures." Hook queries whether the generality of students in late adolescence can truly make an informed decision about their abiding educational needs. He still wishes to see developed curricula of liberal general education concerned primarily with cultivating "an intelligent and responsible citizenry." He hopes to see the universities inculcate a "methodological skepticism" as a counterweight to the trends toward "cultural barbarism." There are now, as he notes, "more students enrolled in courses in astrology than astrophysics." Has the university not failed when it has not imparted a sense of evidence to its students and a "permanent defence against gullibility?" And in the future, will not students who have been moulded into cultural and scientific illiterates "sue their educational alma maters?" The malpractice suits which could be instituted against purveyors of so-called "critical theory" and "innovative approaches" in departments of political science, sociology, and literature boggle the imagination. They would make the medical malpractice problem look like a minor skirmish, and the academic world would surely be hard pressed to hide the sub-intellectual clowning and demagogic antics which so frequently fill the time of seminars and lectures.

One can understand why so many students, tired of the ideological vogue and its preceptors, have turned to bread-and-butter vocational and professional courses. There at least a sense of reality, fed by hard work, prevails rather than the fantasy of so many offerings in "social studies."

THE MAJOR DIFFICULTY in the way of General Education is that it requires exceptional teachers, with a rare combination of breadth and depth of knowledge, analytic power, and expository skill. Too often what the student receives is a smattering of "data" and ideological distortion from a frustrated pedagogue, half-politician and half-rebel. Moreover, even with the best curricula and teachers, a majority of university students have probably never enjoyed, or even wished for, advanced work in the arts or sciences. How often does one meet alumni who feel that their college years were essentially wasted ones! At commencement time, the undercurrent of feeling among the graduates is often one of resentment at not having been "fitted for anything" after four academic years. Perhaps, then, the vocational-professional direction is one to be assisted rather than deplored. The liberal-arts philosophy was one that was adapted to a highly selected élite at Oxford and Cambridge with social prerogatives of rule. It may be ill adapted to the interests, ambitions, and abilities of the generality of students. Those with vocational-professional aims were less vulnerable during the late 1960s to the winds and windbags of ideology. It was typically the disoriented arts students who grasped at the easy formulae of indignation and insurrection. An engineering, law, or medical student was not under a compulsion to occupy buildings and collectively waste time; he had too much to do.

Though for nine years I tried to advance General Education in the social sciences at the University of California, I cannot quite share the optimism of Sidney Hook as to its possibilities. Perhaps philosophy, political science, and sociology would thrive better if they were pursued less in "courses" than in the extra-curricular discussions among otherwise professionally-directed students. One recalls that Albert Einstein never took "a course in philosophy" but was always discussing it with his fellow students in science. Those with the character, resoluteness, and powers required for an undergraduate calling in the social sciences may be a smaller minority than we have usually believed.

On the other hand, it is also true that a teacher with the Socratic genius of a Sidney Hook can transform a classroom into such a drama of ideas that even the most anti-intellectual is for a brief while ready to take his footman's part. If all university teachers were as Sidney Hook, then his educational hopes might well be realisable. So few are. One registers the fact with a melancholy gratitude.

[3] *The Philosophy of the Curriculum: The Need for General Education.* By SIDNEY HOOK, PAUL KURTZ, MIRO TODOROVITCH. Prometheus Books, $10.95.

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Gavin Ewart

Adolescent Agonies

Though my potential is enormous
examinations give me traumas,
and women with their little pee-things,
chattering among the tea things.
Self, oh, self! Oh, thou that kissest
the upturned face of this narcissist!
All my thoughts, directed mewards,
miss the glories that lie seawards,
my psyche is in such a panic
I can't start feeling oceanic.

Venus with her pouting bust is
no consoler for injustice,
everywhere the poor are treated
like phrases that must be deleted.
It makes me feel I'm going barmy
to see how often it's an Army
that rules the young illiberal countries.
O Diana, Queen and Huntress,
moonlike maid with circling crescent,
have pity on this adolescent!

We are nothings, we are zeros,
completely in the power of Eros,
here today and gone tomorrow,
in a vale of tears and sorrow,
in a time of crime and crisis
licking lollies, eating ices.
When the social groups first started
were men even then cold-hearted?
Did we never care for others?
What's that archaic word now? "Brothers"?

I reject what admen taught us,
I reject the plays of Plautus,
classical and other studies,
the conmen and the fuddy-duddies.
Both are very far from noble.
My distress is yours—and global.
I am Man, not very happy
in the nightie or the nappy,
not enjoying his sins and sexes,
husbands, wives and sorrowing exes.

You can't ignore my wounded feelings
in your Exeters and Ealings,
mine is trouble that surpasses
differences of clocks and classes;
though you are completely gormless
and your life is calm and stormless,
hire purchase mortgage man, flat-renter,
I live at the stormy centre.
I am in that sad position:
permanently in transition.

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Michael Longley

Loamshire

For years its economy has been running down
Because most of the inhabitants are poets
Who cultivate wild thyme or bog asphodel
And profess a diminishing interest in
The hidden meaning of the root vegetable.

The population explosion makes matters worse
Despite the by now famous last words of one
Who was crushed to death under his first tractor,
Or the demise of another who was kicked into
Unconsciousness for ever by a horse's hoof:

They both died smiling: and now the empty stable
That accumulates an aura of picturesque
Dilapidation, and the broken machinery
That drops petals of rust on to the relics stand
As the shrines of a continuous pilgrimage.

Religious practice requires the sentimental
Sacrifice and complete extermination of
Such domestic animals as the pig and goat,
So that the prevalent diet has become
Badger hams, the occasional roast hedgehog,

Or, when in season, brightly coloured berries
And the unprotected eggs of rare species
Whose short memories return every springtime,
Risking naked eyes and hungry binoculars
To nest among denuded hedgerows, bare branches.

In all likelihood the number of emigrants
Would increase were it not for the sad tendency
Of the highways to dwindle to grassy byways
That meander beyond inaccurate signposts,
And the impossibility of locating,

Even if this were desirable, the county
Capital or some administrative centre
That might focus the scatter of smallholdings
And reduce the raggedly drawn boundary
To a dispute of international proportions.

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THEATRE

Ibsen & the Absurd

By John Weightman

TWO OR THREE MONTHS ago, I expressed a very unfavourable reaction to *John Gabriel Borkman*, as performed at the National Theatre with a brilliant cast including two dames and a knight. It was, in fact, the lack of true knightliness, of any genuine psychological nobility in the character of Borkman himself, that I objected to. It seemed to me that Ibsen was deploying his symbols in far too obvious a manner to engender falsely tragic emotion about a hollow, neo-Nietzschean tycoon, and I was puzzled that such a play should be thought a modern masterpiece. I am still of the same mind as regards *John Gabriel Borkman*, but having now seen a superb performance of *Hedda Gabler* at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and having put myself through a vacation course of Ibsen reading, I must hasten to make *amende honorable*.

John Gabriel Borkman is a relatively poor play, in which the characteristic Ibsen elements are unconvincingly combined and the straining after tragedy ill-judged. But the better works—and *Hedda Gabler* is one of them—have a fascinatingly bleak quality, which is perhaps Nietzschean in the deeper sense of being beyond good and evil. Hedda is certainly not a good woman; she is an unashamedly destructive bitch, and it is not surprising that the moralistic press of the 19th century should have exclaimed about the "moral sewer gas" of Ibsen drama. Some of the newspaper comments are quoted in the RSC programme, as if they were self-evidently mistaken, whereas they are perfectly true from a certain angle. No one who believes in goodness as a prime virtue could be comfortably at home in Ibsen's universe. If I am not mistaken, it would be impossible to name a single interesting "good" character in any of the major plays. Even Nora, in *The Doll's House*, has iron in her soul, and Ellida, in *The Lady from the Sea*, gives remarkably short shrift to her returned sailor, who has remained faithful for unnumbered years. Ibsen's forte is the creation of rasping, disagreeable characters, who are impatient about life and very prone to look upon death, absence or departure as an immediate alternative. So true is this that, on reading *Rosmersholm*, I found myself wondering why Dame Rebecca West took her pen-name from the rather dislikable heroine of that play who, after the failure of her first attempts at progressive activity through manipulating a wishy-washy lover whose wife's mind she has poisoned, concludes a suicide pact with him and jumps off a bridge.

In short, Ibsen's critical attitude to average bourgeois society, which was so exciting for the forward-looking people who first welcomed his plays, is far from making him into a positive, Left-Wing humanitarian. Indeed, he seems to have no stronger term of abuse than "liberal." Would he really have wanted a decent, well organised society, in which municipal councils were honest and family life all sweetness and light? Does he really believe in the fundamental goodness of man and the perfectibility of society? I doubt it. He sometimes gives the impression of holding these views, but only because his exasperation with the *status quo* makes him behave as if he were on the side of the angels. Judging by the darkest plays—*Hedda Gabler* and *The Master Builder*—the only angel he is genuinely allied with is Lucifer, *i.e.* the Promethean angel, of whom Nietzsche's *Übermensch* was only a modern reminting. His deepest commitment is to the freedom of strong individuals who are striving to be themselves, whatever that may mean, in an incomprehensible universe. Unlike his half-disciple Shaw, he is not an evolutionary meliorist with secondary Nietzschean overtones; he is much nearer to being a primary Nietzschean, a Promethean Absurdist, like Malraux, Sartre in some moods, and the early Camus.

HOWEVER, HE HAS different levels of sensibility and they are variously arranged from play to play. A peculiarity of his situation in dramatic history is that he is a master of *la pièce bien faite*, as exemplified by Scribe, Sardou, Dumas *fils*, etc. His patterns are always firmly arranged, the symbols richly polyvalent and the general effect strong, if not always immediately comprehensible. But one feels each time that it ought to be clear, because the tone of the play seems to be pointing a moral. The explanation for this may be that the 19th-century *pièce bien faite* derives in its turn from the Anglo-French bourgeois drama of the 18th century, which was essentially a moralising form, intended to express middle-class seriousness and do-good-ism, as opposed to aristocratic frivolity and panache. Ibsen makes lavish use of all the stock theatrical conventions associated with the form and its moral preoccupations: arrivals and departures, separations and reunions, guilty secrets emerging from the past, the interwoven stresses of commercial and sexual morality, class differences and family conflicts. One or two of his plays, in fact, are very close to the most conventional

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examples of the genre. *Pillars of Society* has all the typical features, including a central hypocritical character, Bernick, who is converted to virtue in the end, and that typical device of the French bourgeois drama, *l'oncle d'Amérique*. *An Enemy of the People* is a slightly more sophisticated instance of bourgeois drama; Dr Stockmann, the hero who sets out to denounce municipal malpractice, is not a wooden personification of virtue, like, say, the heroes in Diderot's *Le Père de Famille* or *Le Fils Naturel;* he is impulsive, indiscreet, vain and not at all a humanity-loving democrat; but the general line-up of the characters in terms of black, white and grey corresponds to the simplistic patterning of the bourgeois drama. If Ibsen had written only this sort of play, he would have been a minor questioner of social evils, like Dumas *fils* and Brieux, and he would have died with the 19th century.

IN HIS BETTER WORKS, he does not simply subvert conventional morality or proceed by paradox, which is Shaw's typical device. After exploring the moral issue in the clash of the dialogue, he may bring the play to a dramatic conclusion with a definitive event—a death, a suicide or a departure—which, however, leaves the issue undecided. Besides, the implications of one play may seem to contradict those of another. There is a contrast between his artistic practice and his general behaviour. In his correspondence and *obiter dicta,* he sounds sure of his opinions, aggressive and dogmatic, as if he were impatient with the many fools who could not see the truth staring them in the face. A letter to Brandes, dated 1882, expresses his belief in the minority of the enlightened, the vanguard which pushes on to the points the majority has not yet reached, and concludes categorically: "That man is right who has allied himself most closely with the future."

Yet, for instance, if we take the vexed question of marriage, which is one of his constant concerns, does the future demand that all unions founded on a degree of hypocrisy should be broken up, at whatever cost, in the name of moral honesty, or that it is better to keep a defective marriage going rather than risk upsetting the apple-cart? At the end of *The Doll's House,* Nora goes off into the unknown to achieve self-realisation, leaving her three children to be looked after by the servants and her mediocre husband, and her decision appears ruthlessly heroic: she herself may come to a bad end in a good, individualistic cause, while her abandonment of the children is a crime mitigated by self-sacrifice. The lesson of *The Wild Duck* is quite different: Gregers Werle, through his prim, bachelor insistence on the truth, ruins the re-

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lationship between Hjalmar and Gina, which worked in a ramshackle way, and causes the death of Hedvig; he is castigated by Relling, precisely for not seeing the practical advantages of *mauvaise foi* in making life livable for frail humanity. In one context, Ibsen is denouncing bad faith; in the other, he is justifying it as a necessary ingredient of existence.

One may explain this by saying that Ibsen, in spite of his moralising stance, is perhaps not so much a moralist as a playwright interested in dramatic effects. He may be ringing the changes on similar elements in order to exploit the maximum range of theatrical emotion. In one context, the spectator is expected to throb in sympathy with Nora; in the other, to vibrate in disapproval of Gregers, and in each case it is the reaction that counts, rather than the principle behind it. If the theatre is considered to be primarily a Temple of Emotion (and many typically theatre-minded people appear to be able to enjoy any emotion for its own sake, without needing to enquire into the organic coherence of its roots), well and good. But this was one of my objections to *John Gabriel Borkman*; getting the arrangement slightly wrong, Ibsen showed him behaving disagreeably, like Gregers, and yet was adorning his behaviour with poetic effects, as if we ought to sympathise with him, as with Nora.

THERE ARE MANY curious little twists in the plays which leave one wondering whether Ibsen intended them to be interpreted as human-all-too-human confusions in the characters themselves, or whether they are unassimilated fragments in his own philosophy of life. For instance, why does Nora abandon her children? She implies at times that, having forged a signature, she is morally unreliable and therefore cannot bring them up properly; she has to go off and discover herself before she can assume responsibility for other people. She is surely wrong in her reasoning because, as she points out elsewhere, her crime was a minor one committed with the best of intentions, and she is leaving her children in a situation poisoned with conventional morality. But perhaps Ibsen felt that she was, in a sense, guilty, and that poetic justice had to operate, as it usually does in bourgeois drama. If so, he has failed to see that, from the Absurdist point of view, which is his deepest intuition, poetic justice is just as illusory as the pathetic fallacy. There is no morality in nature or history, only the operation of necessity, which runs through everything, including the human temperament. If partial acceptance of guilt is meant to be a reason for Nora's departure, this is a flaw in the play; she ought not to have abandoned her children. It may be, of course, that Ibsen, the playwright, thought first of the splendid dramatic device of the slammed door and wanted to get to it by hook or by crook.

A SIMILAR UNCERTAINTY occurs, with more disruptive effect, in *Ghosts*, which I have always thought to be one of the least satisfactory plays, although it is not a simple propaganda work, like *Les Avariés* by Brieux. The moral issue raised by syphilis is not difficult to state: no syphilitic person should wittingly infect the healthy or beget children, since this would be a straightforward act of malignancy. But syphilis in itself is not wicked, nor is it a punishment for wickedness; like any other disease, it is a neutral part of the so-called "economy" of nature. To superstitious minds, it can appear to be a punishment, *i.e.* a form of poetic justice, because it begins in the sexual organs and eventually affects the brain, in other words, relates to the two most prestigious parts of the human anatomy. Brieux's play, as I remember it, is a right-minded, didactic piece attacking the bourgeois hypocrisy which prevented the frank discussion of syphilis in connection with *mariages de convenance*. However, in *Ghosts*, there is a definite suggestion that Alving *père* contracted syphilis because of his immorality, that Mrs Alving connived in the immorality for the sake of preserving appearances, and that she is now being punished by seeing Oswald decline into imbecility. The details are left vague, but if Alving *père* caught syphilis only through seducing the servant girl when he was drunk, he was singularly unlucky, like the Cambridge don I once heard about who celebrated the award of his Fellowship by plucking up courage to go on one occasion with a prostitute, possibly in a well-meaning attempt to cure himself of latent inversion, and then rotted away disastrously in a few years. In any case, if the servant was syphilitic, how can her daughter, Regine, who is also the child of Alving *père*, be in robust health, when her half-brother, Oswald, has been infected? I suspect Ibsen to be arranging dramatic contrasts: Northern darkness, syphilis, and bourgeois benightedness in opposition to Southern sun, freedom, and aesthetic creativity; pure young girl in opposition to diseased young man; half-brother incestuously attracted to half-sister, etc., without getting the relationship between morality and necessity quite right.

I am not sure whether the theme of the play is meant to be "the sins of the fathers are visited on the children" or "like father, like son" (Oswald takes to drink and tries to seduce Regine). If it is the first, syphilis is being used as a form of poetic justice, which is manifestly wrong. Alving *père* could have been sexually immoral without contracting the disease, and he could have been

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diseased without being sexually immoral, just as Lingstrand, in *The Lady from the Sea*, is tubercular without having done anything wrong. As for the second theme, it would be a dull form of determinism, and one not much in keeping with ordinary experience. I would guess Ibsen to be yielding to the temptation to present syphilis as a specifically bourgeois evil. Something similar happens in *The Wild Duck*, where the profligate Werle *père* transmits his bad eyesight (a consequence of venereal disease?) to his illegitimate daughter, Hedvig. However, as one of the characters points out in the play, Werle *père* goes unpunished, apart from his incipient blindness, and he even settles down to a comfortable old age with his attractive mistress, so that he is not a victim of poetic justice to the same extent. Hedvig dies, but Werle *père* is not immediately to blame; the fault lies with Gregers, the too-severe Puritan. The message may be that immoral fathers produce sometimes diseased, sometimes morally intemperate, sons. In both cases, at any rate, a message seems to be hanging in the air and it cannot easily be squared with Ibsen's fundamental Absurdist irony.

AT THE SAME TIME, it is in *Ghosts* that Ibsen comes closest to making the obvious point about the hiatus between morality and necessity, in connection with the decision not to insure the orphanage. Mrs Alving, making atonement for her past mistakes and yet compounding them by reinforcing her dead husband's false reputation for virtue, founds the Alving orphanage. Pastor Manders explains that to insure such a charitable institution against the risk of fire would be to display a lack of faith in Providence and its inherent goodness. He might have added that all insurance is, philosophically, a post-providentialist phenomenon. If man has to be provident, this can only mean that God is not, although attempts have been made to straddle the contradiction in such semi-Absurdist phrases as "Trust in God and keep your powder dry" or "God helps those who help themselves." A thoroughgoing Absurdist believer, such as Simone Weil, will say that God allows necessity full play and even submits to it Himself in the person of Christ; man, like the Man-God, is literally crucified on necessity. Amplifying Simone Weil's idea, we could add that the crucifix, with its two bars set at right angles to each other, the vertical one representing the ruthlessness of necessity (the downward pull of gravity) and the horizontal one representing the outstretched arms of suffering man, is a perfect symbol of the tension between scientific law and human emotion. In *Ghosts*, the orphanage burns down; God has allowed necessity full play, or God is malevolent enough to want to punish Mrs Alving's presump-

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tion and past errors even at the expense of the orphans, or God does not exist.

THE BEAUTY of *The Master Builder* and *Hedda Gabler* is that they are almost pure expressions of the frustrated Promethean impulse, uncluttered by any worry about moral justification or any particular tendency to blame society for what is, after all, a metaphysical situation, whereas *Ghosts*, *The Wild Duck* and *The Lady from the Sea* tend to confuse the metaphysical and the social. In *The Wild Duck*, the bird with the broken wing surviving in captivity can be understood, on one level at least, as the metaphysical aspiration, the Promethean impulse, smothered by bourgeoisism or the muddle of human relationships. A whole range of ornithological parallels served this purpose in the 19th and early 20th centuries: the lark, the albatross, the swan, the vulture, the eagle, the sea-gull, the blue-bird and even the cuckoo. But I cannot see *The Wild Duck* as Ibsen's masterpiece, because Gregers is mistakenly working off his thirst for the absolute through messing up still further human lives that are already beyond redemption. *The Lady from the Sea* is exceptional in that, for once, Ibsen prefers the comfortably human to the grandly impossible. Ellida renounces her oceanic Stranger, the symbol of her "craving for the unattainable ... for the limitless", in favour of happy domesticity; that is, she moves back from cosmic poetry to the bourgeois drama: Undine settles on dry land. But *The Master Builder* and *Hedda Gabler* have no truck with bourgeois values, although the latter play may have the outward appearance of a bourgeois drama; Solnes and Hedda are the male and female versions of the same exasperated Absurdist character.

Solnes, being a man with a constructive gift, can create buildings which rise heavenwards, first in an automatic gesture of worship, then in a gesture of revolt. When he speaks to God from the top of the church tower, he finds that God is not there or does not deign to reply. So he comes down to build houses for men, but either men are so mediocre as not to be worth building for, or they are potential rivals and so challenge the Promethean creator's need to feel supreme and unique. (At times, Ibsen manipulates the subject/object tension almost as systematically as Sartre.) Finally, Solnes builds his own house, as a monument to himself, with its tower and its significantly empty nurseries (physical procreation, an animal, *i.e.* organic, scientific process, is a mere extension of contingency; it would take a wise father to know the "necessity" of his own child in the way a creator knows his works). Egged on by Hilde, a minor Hedda, he climbs to the top of this personal tower in a last frenzy of self-affirmation, and plunges to his death.

Hedda is devoid of artistic creativeness and, being a woman, is cursed with a womb that conceives against her will and, what is worse, is legitimately fertilised by the least interesting of her three male partners. Whereas Solnes can be positive in defiance, she can only be positive in negativity, through manipulating the men: Tesman, the mediocre, "good" husband, with whom she makes do as a bread-winner, and whom she has married through the Absurdist accident of making a remark about the house; Brack, amoral though by profession a judge, and a valid, if non-poetic opponent, with whom she spars zestfully, until he threatens to get the better of her; and Lövborg, the Dionysiac *beau ideal*, with whom she might just have thrown in her lot, had she been absolutely sure that he had vine leaves in his hair and was not just another gifted weakling, unable to distinguish between ecstasy and drink.

As Miss Glenda Jackson plays her, with magnificently sustained viciousness and a thrilling range of intonation, Hedda is not just a Norwegian Madame Bovary, longing for romantic fulfilment; she is a suburban Lady Macbeth or Madame de Merteuil, whose boredom is so intense as to lend metaphysical dignity to bad temper in a bourgeois drawing-room. The symbols, too, have a splendid, melodramatic simplicity and are so dreamlike that Ibsen himself may not have been fully aware of them. Hedda is a dismounted Amazon, forced to fight on foot indoors, instead of galloping freeely out of doors, and her father's pistols, which she uses to frighten Brack, an ambiguous devotee of "the back way", and one of which she passes to Lövborg, are male attributes handled more competently by her than by the men. Her movement when she presents the pistol to Lövborg, offering him, as it were, a means of lethal potency with which to escape aesthetically from the humdrum, has the same mixture of sexuality and intellectual tension as Phèdre's gesture in grasping at Hyppolite's sword. The phallic symbol is being offered to the man in the one case, and snatched from him in the other, and the aim in both cases is death, the polar opposite of sex.

This is not to say that *Hedda Gabler*, like *Phèdre*, is a tragedy, since tragedy supposes some transcendental witness or counterpart or law, against which human effort and failure are being measured, and which can underwrite the catharsis. Ibsen's play is a black, Absurdist farce. Lövborg muffs his exit by shooting himself accidentally in the stomach, *i.e.* in the guts and near the genitals, during a row with a prostitute; Hedda can only retort with the vain, stylish gesture of putting the pistol to her temple, the nobly-named seat of Absurdist awareness.

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NOTES & TOPICS

A Nice Place to Visit

AMERICANS, as Tocqueville and others have pointed out, are too busy finding solutions for the future to have much patience with the past—especially, one might add, the recent past. The distant past may be viewed through heroic or nostalgic lenses, but the recent past is too close for comfort. It's embarrassing because it's about us. Perhaps that is one reason why very little has been said or written by politicians or journalists about the recently deceased but unlamented war in Viet Nam. The tragedy over, Americans are calm of mind, all passion spent. Or perhaps they are merely bored with it all, sated by 10 years of news from a country that surely cannot be of much interest to most Americans.

Because no one wants to talk or think about Viet Nam any more, many Americans will gladly assent to the notion that what finally happened there is all for the best. They will be eager to accept benign new portraits of their former enemy, in this way reassuring themselves that dread Necessity—the ignominious defeat by a minor Asian power—was really in the best interests of all concerned. Such portraits will take the form of exercises in demystification, attempts to exorcise the old demon of the communist menace by providing us with the long historical view of an "expert" on South-east Asian culture.

Such a portrait has already been painted by Frances FitzGerald in an article entitled "Journey to North Vietnam", which appeared in a recent issue of *The New Yorker*. Ms FitzGerald clearly has the right credentials for undertaking such a commission. She is the author of *Fire in the Lake* (1972), a book about Viet Nam that won several awards in the United States. She has also written pieces on Cuba and Iran for several influential American journals.

One may wonder about such *expert* visiting journalists, for her article, which was actually written a short time before the war ended, panders to our need to find some good in all endings—evoking as it does a North Viet Nam of order, harmony, and decency. Ms FitzGerald of course isn't prevaricating. She reports what she saw and heard—that is, what she wanted to see and hear, like the believers who went to Russia in the 1930s, those enthusiasts whom David Caute surveyed in his book, *The Fellow-Travellers* (1973).[1]

One has no way of knowing whether the picture FitzGerald paints of North Viet Nam and its citizens is an accurate one, but the very language of her celebrations evokes the language of those celebrants of 40 years ago. As we now know, the gap between their tales and the reality of life in the Soviet Union at the time was enormous. Though the gap between what FitzGerald reports and the reality of life in North Viet Nam is probably not as great, since North Viet Nam lacks a Stalin, it still behooves us to be sceptical of any "tale" that smacks of the tales of the Thirties.

THE COMPLACENT RHETORIC of her piece deserves, I think, close analysis. She begins by suggesting that Hanoi is in some ways similar to Saigon: a hotel in Hanoi has an air of decayed elegance, just like a hotel she knows in Saigon. The comparison is reassuring; the world we are entering is not very different from the world we have left. But if Hanoi looks a bit like Saigon, the atmosphere of Hanoi is quite different from Saigon's: there are no whores, street sellers, or transvestites. Instead of hysterical children begging for money, she sees groups of well-behaved boys wearing red neckerchiefs. Chaos reigns in decadent Saigon, ruined by instant Americanisation, whereas in orderly Hanoi "they have kept up many of the old customs."

Hanoi, FitzGerald implies, is the kind of city that no longer exists in the United States—a pleasant, medium-sized city, clean and safe.

> "In the afternoons, Hanoians drink beer on the terrace of the little restaurant next to the lake; they rent rowing shells or go for a ride in the motorboats that putter back and forth between its islands."

In the evenings lovers sit on benches in the small, dark place near the lake. The police, tolerant and understanding, don't bother the lovers, nor do they bother "the little boys who illegally fish in the lake with home-made spinning rods."

[1] See also, in ENCOUNTER, Paul Hollander, "The Ideological Pilgrim: Looking for Utopia, Then and Now" (November 1973), and George Watson, "Were the Intellectuals Duped? The 1930s Revisited" (December 1973).

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After the introductory tableau, with its home-made spinning rods, we are treated to cameos of the people—at least the people whom Ms FitzGerald was allowed to meet. North Vietnamese officials, she stresses, have "an undercurrent of irony that is completely subversive to high-flown rhetoric and doctrinaire rigidity." This is especially true of the more important officials. "The higher up or the more sophisticated the official, the less rhetoric there would be." Very few windy bores spouting Marxism-Leninism, just as there were very few windy bores to greet those intellectuals who visited Russia in the '30s.

We first meet an economist, someone whom Sidney and Beatrice Webb would have liked, since he seems more of a Fabian Socialist than a Marxist-Leninist:

> "His presentation was matter-of-fact, unpolemical, and rather more lucid than that of most economists. . . . What he talked about mostly was building factories, getting things done."

Then, as if to show that there are thinkers in North Viet Nam as well as doers, we meet an intellectual, someone who sees himself as part of the French intellectual tradition, the resident J.-P. Sartre, his Marxism "of the philosophical sort, his theoretical work elegant and literary." We also meet a more commonsensical type, an official who is down-to-earth and extremely informative. . . . " Then a university student, who was "one of the least self-conscious people I've ever met." Although she has suffered a great deal, she "seemed to have no emotional scars from the war. . . . " She is "a good student, a responsible girl. . . . " The tour of officials ends with a humanist—an editor who, in talking of the war, conveyed "the human scale of the whole enterprise: the sorrow of it, and the exhaustion and the difficulty that the leaders had undergone in making some of their decisions." Disturbed about the economic problems of the United States, "he expressed sympathy for the five or six million Americans unemployed." His reaction, FitzGerald assures us, "was sincere."

Our sense of *déjà vu* deepens as FitzGerald gives us snapshots of the good folk of North Viet Nam at work, the heroes of the soil, while she lectures to us about the country's economic development. North Viet Nam, it seems, is charmingly underdeveloped, unlike the Americanised parts of South-east Asia. There are no "superhighways, gas stations, and movie theaters." Even the industrial centres have a rural touch to them, as "workers grow vegetables in factory yards. . . . " The description appeals to America's current nostalgia for rural life, for small-town simplicities. North Viet Nam could be a turn-of-the-century America. . . .

THE ARTICLE NOW moves into the pastoral mode, social-realist version. FitzGerald speaks of the country's agricultural co-ops, which own the land they farm and its produce. No problems with kulaks here: "civil law protects their title to the land and their rights vis-à-vis the state." At one of these co-ops, FitzGerald hears a discussion where everyone voices his opinion, though "at one point the chairman said that the tension of the meeting had given him a headache, and that it would be better to take a break with a few songs." Which they did. Though FitzGerald supplies us with no direct quotations from The People, she assures us that they are grateful for a "government that provides a system of social security for all", a government that has an excellent health-care system as well as an educational network "that is open to all, including adults."

Naturally the North Vietnamese officials are modest about their utopia. "The North Vietnamese officials we met hardly mentioned their country's social achievements. . . ." As practical and judicious men, they above all want "to be frank", as one official said, about their country's problems when they are talking to a journalist whom they have honoured with an invitation to

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tour their country. Decent, modest, and reasonable, the North Vietnamese leaders want business as usual; they seek investments from all governments, even from private companies. These leaders, Ms FitzGerald says, "are clearly taking a gradualist, pragmatic approach to the reorganisation of the economy." Nevertheless these pragmatic officials do emphasise that they are also ardent nationalists who yearn for a reintegration of their country, though they bear no malice towards the United States and hope "for an eventual mending of relations. . . ." All they want in the South is "peace, democracy, national concord, and a new government in Saigon." But they are patient, these leaders, and they realise that in order to eventually reunify the country they will need "a fairly long period of transition, in which they could do the necessary political work in the cities."

"NECESSARY POLITICAL WORK." Three innocuous words. I imagine that FitzGerald batted them out on her typewriter without giving them a second thought. Yet can someone, at this point in the 20th century, really use such a phrase and not be aware of all that it implies? Not be aware—to quote Orwell's "Politics and the English Language"—that such euphemistic language "is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind?"

As Orwell said in the same essay: "words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way." But I doubt that Ms FitzGerald was consciously dishonest; she was merely entranced by her vision of all the good things the new order will bring to those in the South who have no choice but to accept it. History repeats itself, but with some difference. The fellow-travellers of the '30s were innocent; they had no idea of the extraordinary duplicity of the leaders of the Soviet Union. Moreover, beset as they were by a world-wide depression and by the menace of Nazi Germany, they desperately needed to believe that some country in the world at least embodied the idea of the good, even if the reality was not quite up to the idea. One would think that an intellectual nowadays should know better.

It's one thing to accept Necessity, and to be relieved, moreover, that the ghastly war in Viet Nam is over. It's another thing complacently to obey the weight of this sad time by walking away from the bloody stage reassured that all is for the best. We should remember, though we can do nothing about it, that some people will have to endure the "necessary political work."

Stephen Miller

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The Kathmandu Option

Patrimony & Bureaucracy—By ERNEST GELLNER

KATHMANDU, like Timbuctoo, has become a code-word of ordinary speech. Timbuctoo stands for a city located on the border between fiction and inaccessibility; in reality it happens to be a fascinating centre of scholarship, today as in the past, only mildly cut off by marshes to the South and, in conformity with image, by the desert to the North. The Tuareg still walk through it, veiled and with sword and hand-in-hand, but today they are more likely to be raided by the central government than vice versa. Such is progress. Kathmandu, on the other hand, is known to stand at the end of a viable road, literally and morally. It stands for an option, or rather an opting-out. Europeans no longer inquire of each other, are you Catholic or Protestant?—are you monarchist or republican? —but rather, are you for Economic Growth, or for Kathmandu?

This, if they ever think about it, must be somewhat offensive and irritating for the citizens of Kathmandu and adjoining areas, who after all possess an intrinsic reality which is quite independent of, if not contrary to, whatever symbolic meaning their habitation may have for others. The Kathmandu option, if taken literally, would contain some surprises for those who flirt with it. Here is a distinctive, fascinating, half-explored and quarter-understood society—the last great patrimonial state or oriental despotism; the one pure bit of India unconquered by Muslim or British; the only state in the world in which Hinduism is the established religion, where astrology (under the title "Predictive Aspects of Culture") discreetly figures on the university curriculum; the only surviving princely state of British India, from whose citizens the sad news of Queen Victoria's death has been tactfully withheld; where government is referred to as HMG; where Indian money can still be called the *Company* rupee; an amazing Himalayan patchwork of diverse cultures and faiths with a merely nominal unity; an experiment in something called Panchayat Democracy.

Systematic scholarship, as opposed to mere by-products of restricted diplomatic, military or commercial dealing, has only been possible for outsiders since 1951. Till then, if this was, as many would hold, a patrimonial society, it was an uncommonly well insulated one.

THE FASHIONABLE NOTION of the patrimonial state owes a great deal to Max Weber. The starting point is the idea of a state which is like a household, and is run for the benefit of its master:

> In the patrimonial state the most fundamental obligation of the subjects is the material maintenance of the ruler, just as is the case in a patrimonial household; . . . the difference is only one of degree.

Yet, as in the household, the authority, though not legally circumscribed, is not wholly tyrannical:

> As a rule . . . the political patrimonial ruler is linked with the ruled through a consensual community which also exists apart from his independent military force and which is rooted in the belief that the ruler's powers are legitimate in so far as they are *traditional*.

Though possessing this consensual element, yet

> The continuous struggle of the central power with the various centrifugal local powers creates a specific problem for patrimonialism when the patrimonial ruler . . . confronts not a mere mass of subject . . . but when he stands as one landlordabove other landlords, who . . . wield an autonomous authority of their own. . . . Some Roman emperors, Nero, for example, went far in wiping out private large landowners, especially in Africa. However, if the ruler intends to eliminate the autonomous *honoratiores*, he must have an administrative organisation of his own . . . .

All these observations find echoes in the history of Nepal as it was until very recently, with perhaps one qualification:

> Even under purely bureaucratic patrimonialism no administrative technique could prevent that, as a rule, the individual parts of the realm evaded the ruler's influence the more, the farther away they

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were from his residence. . . . This is also a consequence of the need . . . for rapid decision-making by the officials in the case of enemy attacks on these marches. . . .[1]

This last trait does not ring so true of Nepal in, say, the second half of the 19th century. No enemy seemed very threatening for any distant province, notwithstanding some trouble with Tibet and China, and hence its administrators had correspondingly less opportunity to attain autonomy. And, of course, there was a good reason for this exceptional state of affairs: *this* patrimonial state, if such it was, did not have fuzzy boundaries. It was embedded, on three sides, in an impeccably, indeed paradigmatically bureaucratic state, namely British India. This was a territorially circumscribed, underwritten, guaranteed patrimonialism, with frontiers secure from aggression or secession. This unusual, strong and secure context is one element which defined the character of Nepal.

THE HIMALAYAS are an ethnic and religious patchwork, where Mongoloid and Indo-European populations and tribal groups meet and mingle with even older autochthonous strains, and where two great religions compete, be it for souls or for social allegiance, with previous shamanistic beliefs and practices. (The theoretical applicability of the very term "shaman" has been challenged by a notable Nepalologist, Professor Alexander Macdonald; but it may do as shorthand.) This is where Hinduism, which hardly possesses the conceptual tools for proselytising, nevertheless absorbs tribal groups and operates a social alchemy, by which erstwhile clans are transmuted into new castes. Anthropologists such as Dor Bahadur Bista, Alexander Macdonald, Ch. von Fürer-Heimendorf, Lionel and Patricia Caplan, Alan McFarlane, Nicholas Allen and others have now shown us something of this process. This is also where it meets and competes with that Hinduism-for-export, Buddhism, returning with the prestige of another, Tibetan civilisation. But there is also an intervening cultural buffer zone. As an American anthropologist, Gerald Berreman, observes:

Throughout most of Nepal . . . there is a broad belt on which Tibetan culture does not directly meet Indian culture. . . .

It is these cultural and religious marchlands which provided the seedbed in which this fascinating polity emerged. Perhaps, as the great French scholar L. Lévi speculated at the beginning of the century, Nepal is India in the making—though we shall probably never know just how India was made.

THE MODERN NEPALESE STATE has its origins in the meeting of Hindu refugees from the Muslim conquerors of India with the local Mongoloid tribes. In some ways, the Gurkha kingdom, as it was initially known, is to Hinduism as the Ottoman Turks were to Islam—it is the sword arm of a religion.

There is a difference. The Turkic tribes emerged from central Asia and came to Islam, embraced it for the legitimacy or prestige it conferred on their rulers, or for the convenience it provided for their administrations. In the Himalayas, it was the other way round: Hinduism came to the mountains rather than vice versa, in the form of migrating Hindu populations and ideas. Hindu brain and tribal brawn led to the emergence of a whole set of hill kingdoms, religiously legitimated and supported by a sturdy peasantry, just as there was a whole group of Turkish principalities in Anatolia. From their rivalry, the Gurkha state emerged victorious, as the Osmanli sultanate had done in Anatolia. And the brain/brawn, legitimacy/military base formula worked well, in both cases.

Father L. F. Stiller, S.J., opens his *The Rise of the House of Gorkha*[2] with the words

The rise of the House of Gorkha is undoubtedly the most significant event—the critical turning point—in the history of modern Nepal. It marks the transition in the hill regions of Nepal from the era of Himalayan valley-centred petty states to the period of true national growth.

And later he goes on to confirm the presence of the first, and, for Karl Marx, the distinctive trait of the Asiatic mode of production:

All land was understood to be the property of the state.

There were some interesting exceptions to this. Some tribes submitted to the Gurkha conquerors only on condition that their traditional land-tenure system was respected. This has been well explored by the anthropologist Lionel Caplan. Some of the characteristically patrimonial arrangements had some local traits, most suitable for a land which straddles glaciers and tropical jungle:

Instead of obliging each village to supply a portion of the expenses of the royal table and for the salaries of the royal servants [the ruler] set apart special villages for the support of particular departments of the Rajah's service. . . . A line of villages . . . was set apart for supplying the royal table with snow. . . .

[1] *Economy and Society*. By MAX WEBER. Translated by GÜNTHER ROTH and CLAUS WITTICH, 3 vols., Bedminster Press, N.J. (1968), distributed by Sifo AB, Sweden, Sw. Cr. 270, $60,00, £30.

[2] *The Rise of the House of Gorkha*. By LUDWIG F. STILLER, S.J. Manjusri Publishing House, New Delhi, Rs. 60 and Rs. 45.

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Taking over the term "sanskritization" from the Indian anthropologist Srinivas to refer to Hindu cultural diffusion, Stiller goes on to observe, speaking of the pre-Gurkha period of political fragmentation:

> . . . the ruling class of most of the hill states had been subjected to a process of sanskritization, as a result of which the ruling class throughout most of Greater Nepal was Hindu . . . in such a society it was not only the king's right to rule, to enforce law, and to punish transgression, it was his religious duty to do so.

And to underscore the circle which connected legitimacy and economy:

> To put the political aspect of land control in the clearest possible focus, the land was life; the land was security; the land was wealth and prestige. And the land was the rajah's; the rajah, therefore, controlled life; he controlled security; he controlled wealth and prestige. And therefore he controlled his people.
>
> Ultimate ownership of the land was vested in the crown. This ownership did not . . . extend to those who farmed the land. The peasant was not a serf bound to any particular locality, but remained free to migrate. . . . However, if the peasant opted to till the soil—and . . . this option was the obvious one—his rights to the land . . . were limited to tenancy rights . . . the rajah was under no obligation to keep him on the land.

The noble was no less vulnerable to the royal will.

The power base with which the Gurkha kingdom entered history was not large: 12,000 households, at most 15-20,000 men, of whom a third were exempt from military service in virtue of being Brahmins. . . . Nevertheless, the thing was achieved. The key step in the establishment of the Nepalese kingdom was the conquest of Kathmandu valley.

A CERTAIN MISCONCEPTION needs to be corrected. The phrase "Kathmandu valley" conjures up, to those who have not visited it, the image of a kind of Alpine valley writ large, at a Himalayan scale—a long valley cut off by rock ridges from other similar valleys, with, presumably, a glacier at its head. In fact, Kathmandu valley is nothing of the kind. It is roughly circular in shape, surrounded by low hills, with nothing remotely resembling a glacier near it. Both legends and geology say it was once a lake, and its soil is correspondingly rich.

Above all, its inhabitants are no kind of crude, simple mountain peasants. Quite the reverse. If the Gurkhalis were the Anatolian Turks of this empire, then Kathmandu valley was its Constantinople. Its final capture was preceded by prolonged encirclement and much fighting, but

> . . . the conquest [of the three cities of the valley] was something of an anti-climax. After so many years of struggle and . . . so many . . . battles, the Gorkhalis literally walked into Kathmandu. The attack was planned for late September 1768, during the festivities of Indra Jatra. The Gorkhali lines were pushed right up to the walls of the city. . . . [The inhabitants], together with their king, celebrated the Indra Jatra festival as usual. The festival seems to have gone on with very little concern about the Gorkhalis camped outside.

Who were these inhabitants, who accepted their conquerors with such passivity and devotion to ritual?

CALCULATION AS WELL AS resignation and ritualism may have contributed to their supine attitude. The man who is the most productive and perhaps the most brilliant of Nepalese historians, Mahesh C. Regmi, thinks so:

> The Gorkhali conquest was . . . welcomed by the mercantile community of Kathmandu valley, particularly the Newars. [The conqueror] served their interests additionally by expelling Indian traders from the area. Within a few years after the conquest of the Kathmandu valley, we find Newar merchants trading even in the interior Western regions, as physical and political obstructions to trade were eliminated as a result of political unification. Moreover, a centralised administration enabled Newar merchants and financiers to diversify their operations. . . .[3]

If the Gurkhas were the Ottomans of this empire, then the Newars were its Greeks. The Newars are the original inhabitants of Kathmandu valley, still accounting for over half its population. Fanciful theories about their origin apart (*cf.* Gopal Singh Nepali, *The Newars*, Bombay, 1965), they share physical and linguistic traits with other Himalayan tribes. But there the resemblance ends. Where the mountain tribesmen stand for simplicity, the Newars possess one of the most sophisticated cultures of the world, and indeed a traditionally urban one, though Mahesh Regmi observes that in the 18th century "Kathmandu, Bhadgaun and Patan were probably the only settlements which could be described as towns." Nevertheless, theirs is clearly an *urban* culture. Three towns in a not very large valley would in any case indicate this. Moreover, even their other compact settlements, with their superb courtyards and proliferation of shrines, look far more like agro-towns than like villages. They possess one of the finest folk architectures in the world, less dramatic perhaps but more quietly elegant than that of the Atlas or southern Arabia. There is a restfulness about the proportions of a Newar house or courtyard which makes it the Asiatic's Georgian.

The anthropologist Michael Allen goes as far as to say that they "have been, for at least 2000

[3] *A Study in Nepali Economic History*, 1768–1846. By MAHESH CHANDRA REGMI. Manjusri Publishing House (New Delhi, 1971), Rs 39.00, £2.40.

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years, an essentially urban people." Some are Buddhist and some Hindu, and their Buddhism is unusual in managing without monks. Michael Allen considers ("Buddhism without Monks", *South Asia*, vol. 2, 1973)

> . . . the necessity for Buddhism without the patronage of the powerful to move from élitist monasticism to popular folk religion . . . the Newars have done so in part by maintaining their *viharas* as temples for public worship, in part by offering their priestly services to pure castes, and in part by espousing an ideology that places high value on women, meat, drink and other good things of the sensory world.

The majority of Newars are Buddhists, but they have replaced Buddhist monasticism by Hindu principles of heredity. Stephen Greenwold, another modern student of the Newars, notes (in "Kingship and Caste" and "Buddhist Brahmins", *European Journal of Sociology*, 1974 and 1975) that

> No other institution of Newar society has aroused the scorn and condemnation of Western scholars more than that of the hereditary caste of priests . . . who have come to replace Buddhist monks. . . .
>
> Although Newar Buddhism rejects ascetic renunciation, the rituals and symbols of renunciation are still employed. . . . Even though [the priestly élite] in point of fact return to the world of the social, they are said to continue to embody the values of the ascetic. . . .
>
> Perhaps this is mere mystification propagated by obscurantist priests as Rosser would have us believe . . . , but . . . one cannot overlook the very important factor that this ideology is accepted by the Newars themselves.

Whether victims of false consciousness or living contradictions, using an ascetic idiom for a sybaritic existence, the Newars are intriguing and unique.

THREE NEWAR TRAITS strike the visitor: artistic genius, commercial flair, and addiction to ritual. The Gurkha conquerors arrived in the middle of a festival: one's impression is that a more tactful conqueror would still have had some difficulty in timing his arrival so as not to intrude on a carnival. Weberian sociologists may well speculate how such addiction to religion and its audio-visual aids (or perhaps to the aids for their own sake) can go together with outstanding commercial success. In fact they do. Kathmandu has a certain resemblance to Venice, in that it seems arranged to be a setting for carnivals, in its alternation of exuberance and elegance, and in the proportion and size of the older palaces. The striking thing about the artistic richness is its quantity as much as its quality: it is the shrine in each obscure courtyard, not just the celebrated one, which is impressive. Goethe observed on his first Italian journey that he realised life had only at that point begun for him: one may well feel the same when strolling through a Newari town. To appreciate it fully, alas, it is better now to choose some town other than Kathmandu. Newar towns proper are, thanks to their brick, a delightful light red: in Kathmandu, the dirty *feldgrau* of modern concrete is beginning to predominate.

HINDU RULERS, Mongoloid peasant-warriors under their leadership, and the talented Newar traders and craftsmen: these are some, but not all the elements which go into the mix. This Hindu version of the Ottoman empire had not only its Anatolia and its Istanbul, but also its Egypt: the Terai. Mahesh Regmi quotes the conqueror writing to one of his generals that the Terai is "superior and revenue-yielding territory", and adding "We should not relinquish territory in the Terai . . . even if there is war." The Terai is the long strip of tropical lowland which belongs to Nepal, even though its geographic and ethnic affinities are more with the Indian Gangetic plain. If it was revenue-yielding then, it has become all the more valuable now. Where Egypt was made more exploitable by cotton, the Terai was made so by the modern ability to cope with malaria. Today, when the trading activity of the uplands is being asphyxiated by the partial closure of the Nepalese-Tibetan border, the hillmen are swarming into the newly habitable Terai. But even in the days when only those who were habituated to it could survive there all the year round, semi-absentee land-grantees could do well out of it. The Nepalese anthropologist Dor Bahadur Bista investigated a typical village in the Terai: the tenant settlers had come from India, but the tax-exempt semi-absentee beneficiaries of land grants came from the Nepalese élite. In their early wars with Nepal, the British could overrun the relatively accessible Terai, even if they could not do much higher up; but sensibly they eventually handed it back. They noted that this state needed some region to exploit, and there was no point in depriving it of this economic base. Better to lop off some bits at the Eastern and Western ends, to prevent a possible Burmese-Nepalese-Sikh alignment.

The conquest of the Valley and the unification of Nepal were not a mere crude grab for taxable peasants and grantable land; that might apply in some places, but the overall economics of this expansion was far more sophisticated. Mahesh Regmi tells us that:

> The primary objective was to take advantage of the strategic position [of Kathmandu valley] in the Indo-Tibetan trade.

But there was more still in this patchwork, over and above the hills, the Valley, and the exploitable Terai. The political boundary between Nepal

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and Tibet follows, on the whole, the highest watershed in the world; but the cultural boundary is not congruent with this. South of the high Himalayas, there is a long strip of territory which is neither Hindu nor tribal, but Tibetan in culture and Buddhist in religion.

IN THE 19TH CENTURY, two crucial and connected developments happened to this amalgam-empire; the rise of the Ranas (hereditary prime ministers with *de facto* complete control of the state) and the British alliance. The Ranas emerged after a period of palace strife in 1846. They did not deprive the previous ruling house, the Shahs, of formal status—only of effective power. The problem facing a patrimonial state, as Weber noted—how to control the powerful dependants striving for local or central power—was solved with economy and elegance by the founder of the new *de facto* dynasty, Jang Bahadur Rana. Two American specialists, Leo Rose and Margaret Fisher, sum up the situation in *The Politics of Nepal* (1970):

> This remarkable man was able to smash all rival political factions in an efficiently conducted massacre in the royal palace courtyard . . . , after which he stripped the king of power and centralised absolute power in the hands of his own family.[4]

In an Introductory Sketch to his *History of Nepal,* published in 1877, Daniel Wright, late Surgeon-Major in H.M.'s Indian Medical Service and Residency Surgeon in Kathmandu, writes:

> in 1846, the massacre took place of almost all the leading men of the country. . . .

D. R. Regmi gives the figure of 134 victims for the initial massacre (not bad for a technically backward country) and this does not include the subsequent follow-up. But this is clearly much cheaper than entertaining a potentially dissident aristocracy interminably at some oriental Versailles. And the period of super-patrimonialism, underwritten from outside, was soon to begin. Caste rigidity inside, insulation and the British connection outside, fortified by aid to the Company during the Mutiny and the recruitment of Gurkha troops, become the formula. The new ruler was, in due course, knighted, and also made a voyage to England, the first of the Indian princes to do so. A Nepalese historian of strong nationalist sentiments, D. R. Regmi (not to be confused with Mahesh Regmi), writes with contempt (*A Century of Family Autocracy,* 1950, 1958):

[4] *The Politics of Nepal: Persistence and Change in an Asian Monarchy.* By LEO ROSE and MARGARET FISHER. Cornell University Press, $7.95, £4.35.

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By making a sea voyage with the single purpose of personally paying homage to the British throne, Jung Bahadur had also betrayed his weakness to over-zealously act the part of British protected *princeling . . . his remiss conduct in breaking caste* rigidity involved in sea voyage which was a taboo at that time, and for which no other prince was prepared. . . . When a man . . . in his country behaves the cruelest task master in respect of enforcing caste rigidity . . . .

WHY SHOULD A RULER, whose internal authority hinges on the prestige of Hinduism, violate a caste prohibition and cross the sea?—and indeed be the first of his class to do so?

This question of motive is not uninteresting. The official reason was

> to see and bring back intelligence respecting the greatness and prosperity of the country . . . the perfection to which social conditions have been raised there and arts and sciences have been made available to the comforts and conveniences of life.

This makes the Rana ruler sound like a new Peter the Great. If so, these aspirations left few marks. But he had other motives, emanating more directly from the condition of his realm.

> . . . Jang had concentrated all political authority in his hands by the end of 1847. He now sought to establish his monopolistic control over the finances. . . . As a first step he sought maximisation of the revenues from the Terai which was the largest *single source of revenue. . . . This created the* problem of absconsion of the collectors of revenue to the British territory. . . . the prevalence of "awal" [local disease considered fatal for people from the hills] prevented the permanent residence of persons from the valley or the hilly regions for purposes of revenue collection. This right had, therefore, to be farmed out to the local inhabitants who could escape into the British territory. Hence his problem came to be: How should the revenue collectors be prevented from escaping? . . .
>
> (M. S. Jain, *The Emergence of a New Aristocracy in Nepal*, Agra, 1972)

The British authorities in India had been handing over people who were *prima facie* guilty of dacoity or thuggee, but not those accused of cattle-lifting or misappropriation. M. S. Jain argues, convincingly, that the real motive of the trip was to by-pass Delhi and stop this dreadful leak on patrimonial resources. Though apparently not immediately successful, in the long run a reasonably well-sealed frontier does seem to have been achieved.

During the Rana period, caste rules were indeed enforceable by law, even if they did not prevent the ruler's trip to London. The British recruited Gurkha troops from the "Hindu Kingdom of Nepal", as the agreement described it, and indeed the troops had Brahmins as their padres—notwithstanding the fact that, in reality, they were recruited from tribal groups whose hinduisation was far from complete.

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Not all the hill tribes were available for recruitment. For instance, the Tamangs, who live in the hills surrounding the Valley, and who presumably have the same aptitudes and rustic simplicity and toughness as the Magars, Gurungs, Rais or Limbus who did provide recruits, were not available. So close to the patrimonial centre, the rulers did not wish expectations or standards to be raised, even relatively, in a servant and concubine catchment area.

A fragmented pluralism, religious legitimation, and some degree of religious limitation on power; pious foundations, here as in Islam, proliferated and offered some protection from confiscation (religion is not only the opium, but also the tenancy protection of the people); and that external boundary-maintenance by the orderly British régime in India eliminated, from this patrimonialism, that endemic weakness of nebulous frontiers of authority which Weber noted. This was the formula; and it seemed to provide stability at least. (It was clear enough what the British received in turn; a large chunk of the Himalayas administered without trouble or expense, a catchment area for superb troops, and a convenient, trouble-free buffer state to the North.)

THERE SEEMED NO REASON why the system should not last: patrimonialism embedded in and symbiotic with an efficient external bureaucracy, but almost hermetically sealed off, seemed as good a recipe for indefinite survival as one could find. But it was not to last. One weakness arose through a fission in the élite, given to fissiparousness despite its kin bonds and the amazing advantages which collectively it stood or stands to lose; and partly through a kind of independent effect of the religious ideology. After a disastrous earthquake in 1934, the then Rana ruler drew proper conclusions from this act of God and deprived a certain class of kinsmen, originating from miscegenation in violation of caste rules, of some of their privileges. The Ranas had evidently always been spread-eagled between the use of Hinduism as legitimation, and the evasion of its rules for their own advantage. This time, this heeding of the wrath of heaven turned out to be misguided, for it created a disaffected group, well placed to combine with others against the régime.

But the decisive factor was no doubt the new independence of India. A free India was less interested, or not interested at all, in maintaining a buffer patrimonialism in the Himalayas. When the revolution came in 1950, it had, as M. S. Jain noted, the outward form of a Meiji restoration: the rebels used the prestige of the *roi*

Gordon Rattray Taylor

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fainéant against the all-powerful court stewards. Above all, they also had a base in India from which to operate.

The result of the conflict was a compromise. The *rois fainéants* became the true rulers; the all-powerful chamberlains stepped down, but remained economically powerful. (One of them, an able Oxford-trained economist, Pashupati Rana, was rumoured a year or so ago to be the next—legal—prime minister; which would be a Rana restoration, of a kind.) Patrimonialism is dead, long live patrimonialism—the critics might have said. The Ranas were stripped of their power but not of their wealth; at least one of their palaces, with its somewhat *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* elegance, peeling stucco and all, was turned into a hotel. Power shifted back to the Shah family.

THE FORMAL MECHANICS of the coup might have been that of the Meiji restoration, but there the resemblance ends. The revolution did not trigger off a dynamic drive towards modernisation. The 1950s were a decade of parliamentary politics and the party game, ending in a royal coup in 1960. A local and locally published comment on the abandoned parliamentary experiment is worth quoting:

> Nearly all [the] leaders had spent most of their life outside the country and were strongly influenced by the examples and experiences of other countries. They failed to realise that Nepal had neither a network of transport . . . nor the long hard years of campaigning against a colonial power that might have laid an infra-structure of political education. . . . Nor was there a middle class with an independent source of income. . . . And, perhaps most importantly, there was not that fundamental consensus about the ends of the society . . . politicking went on in the Kathmandu Valley. The rest of Nepal, cut off from the capital, was ignored. . . .

This characterisation comes from the pen of Dr M. Mohsin, in his contribution to *Nepal: A Profile*, published in 1970 by the Nepal Council of Applied Economic Research and printed at His Majesty's Government Press, Kathmandu. So what is the alternative? *Panchayat Democracy*, which would seem to be Hinduism's answer to democratic centralism. In practice, it consists of a hierarchy of councils, hierarchical in the sense that the local ones elect regional ones and so on upward, though all are equal in that none of them has much power. Dr Mohsin tells us of the aims of the system:

> The cardinal points that underlie the . . . Panchayat are basically three. Firstly, the . . . system is committed to end all kinds of exploitation. . . . Secondly, it aims at realising [this] . . . not through . . . class struggle, but through class-co-ordination. And thirdly, it does not regard the existence of political parties a *sine qua non* for democracy. . . .

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The background assumptions are interesting:

> Although strongly committed to build up a communitarian exploitation-free society, the Panchayat System, nevertheless, does not ignore the socio-economic realities. . . . Hence it rules out the possibility of a classless society . . . purely a utopian concept . . . the Panchayat System strives to build up an elastically organised, mobile and dynamic social and functional hierarchy.

Constitutionally Nepal is a Hindu state, and Hinduism is normally held to require caste and hence inequality. But clearly there seems some intention to limit the extent of this. All men are born unequal but some will now be less unequal, perhaps. The actual fate of caste is well described by Dr Prachandra Pradhan in *Nepal in Perspective*[5]:

> . . . the century-old legal codes were remodelled in 1964 in . . . the spirit of equality before the law. The new legal code abolished caste discrimination and social disabilities. However, [a] . . . conference for the protection of religion . . . vehemently opposed the new legal code on the ground that its provisions were contrary to Hindu tradition. Acknowledging the opposition, the . . . Royal Secretariat announced that the new legal code had not abolished the caste system. . . . The announcement added that those who indulged in actions prejudicial to the customs and traditions of others would be punished.

Caste is not legally enforceable, but conduct offensive to custom is sanctionable. But caste *is* custom. So? Dr Pradhan also comments on the political system:

> Out of the legitimation of authority . . . by tradition and custom, the King has drawn incomparable political authority. . . . The King occupies the most vital role . . . there is no institutionalized opposition. . . . His authority cannot be questioned in any law court. He is supreme in all fields of political life. . . . While the bureaucracy is weak in relation to the King, in comparison with other political institutions, it is strong. In effect, the National Panchayat has only advisory functions: by and large it performs the ritual function of legitimization. . . .

Dr Pradhan also gives some fascinating statistics on the ethnic origin of ministers. Of a total of 75 office-holders between 1960 and 1972, 49 were drawn from Chetris and Brahmins, i.e. upper levels of the Hindu population proper. Of the remaining 26, 10 were drawn from the talented, geographically central and traditionally urban and educated Newars.

WHAT THE LESS ARTICULATE outsiders think, one can only speculate. But there is criticism from the inside. In the same volume, in a passionate article

[5] *Nepal in Perspective*. Edited by PASHUPATI SHUMSHERE J. B. RANA and KAMAL P. MALLA. Centre for Economic Development and Administration, Kathmandu, Rs. 60, paper Rs. 25.

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on "The Intellectual in Nepalese Society", one of the two editors, Kamal P. Malla, writes:

> The most primary prerequisite for the emergence of a truly independent intellectual class is . . . a sufficient degree of *economic independence*. . . . In Nepal, except for a few self-supporting intellectuals like Mr Mahesh Chandra Regmi . . . or erstwhile politicians . . . or "affluent aristocrats" . . . nearly every one of the established names in the creative and influential fields are in the full time service of the establishment. One plain, but primary reason for the poverty of intellect in Nepal is the poverty of the intellectual.
>
> The rise of Panchayat ideology has given, in a sense, unsought-for opportunities to the writers who have a gift for phrasing.
>
> This almost suffocating milieu is vitiated by a great deal of inbreeding among the Nepalese intelligentsia. . . . on either extreme end of the spectrum there are two parallel and mutually inaccessible cultures: 1. The traditional, sanskritized, Hinduistic, spiritualistic, didactic, introvert, and aggressively nostalgic and nationalistic intellectual culture of the pundits, and 2. The Westernized, a modern jargon-ridden, empirical, critical, at times sophisticated, extrovert intellectual culture of the neo-Brahmins. . . .
>
> . . . it will be fruitless to hunt for Russells, Sartres, Gramscis . . . we have none, except decent, and respectable cogs . . . persistently striving towards the beatitude of an exploitationless state.

This cri-de-coeur provoked a spirited reply from Dr Harka Gurung, an Edinburgh-trained geographer who has attained very high office in the bureaucracy and who comes from one of the mountain tribes—the Gurungs—who previously supplied soldiers rather than clerics to the state:

> In the Nepalese situation where purveyors of ideas receive minimal popular patronage, the intellectuals are inevitably drawn to the economic security of the patron-government bureaucracy. The government has not only been the largest client for intellectual concerns and skills but the chief agent in creating educated personnel as well. The increasing incorporation of intellectuals into organised institutions is indeed a contributory factor to the deflating of tensions between intellectuals and the powers.
>
> My main contention is that Nepalese intellectuals have little relevance to the larger society they presume to address. If the traditionally educated, who continue to dominate the realm of the mind by *ascription*, confine themselves to the ivory tower of past heritage, most modern intellectuals derive their inspiration from alien concepts. . . . There is also the dichotomy of two Nepals owing to the inbreeding of urban intellectuals.
>
> A classic example of how Nepalese intellectuals confound rather than illuminate fundamental issues is the prevailing lop-sided banal emphasis on Sanskritic and Indian aspects of the national culture. . . . Most intellectuals continue to subscribe to the erroneous notion of Mongoloid tribes being mere castes with the Aryan hegemony. . . . One of the important tasks that beckon intellectuals in Nepal is the formulation of a nation out of tribes and communities.

(*Vasudha*, Kathmandu, July–August, 1970 vol. xiii, No. 8).

IT WOULD BE both impertinent and pointless for a foreigner to offer advice. But an outsider may be fascinated and eager to know more of this distinctively Hindu way towards a Nirvana of a unified—but stratified—exploitationlessness.

Last Trains to the Finland Station

On "Radical Sociology"—By JULIUS GOULD

IT IS AN OLD JOKE, but a plausible image, that just as some dog-owners come to look like their dogs, so do sociologists often resemble their subject matter. . . . While they study, *inter alia*, anomie, status-seeking and social divisions they too are anomic and divided. Of course, this is only part of the picture.

Sociology is, for many, almost a surrogate religion. Its exponents preach against social institutions on a variety of grounds. Those institutions are condemned because, for example, they obstruct our natural goodness. Alternatively, they are at fault because they create a structure of inequality that makes it easier for bad people, or people who have been coerced into badness by "the system", to exploit others. The same system also gives the victims of exploitation a chance to struggle for improvements: it then suffers tensions and conflicts. Some sages are prepared to predict the outcome with either optimism or pessimism) —while others, though hoping that the "best" side, *i.e.* the exploited, will win, diplomatically concede that the outcome is open.

To the outsider, then, sociology must often appear a babel of conflicting ceaseless voices—pitched in Britain in a classless or regional tone—pleading the case for a whole series of "new" approaches. Yesterday's new sociology becomes today's intellectual remainder. At one level there is controversy between Marxists and liberal "functionalists"; at another, between rival concentric circles of Marxists; at another, between "positivists" and the purveyors of symbols and meanings, between seekers after "objective"

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truth, whether Marxists or not, and those who choose to meander into and out of romantic subjectivism.

So it was no surprise that Ralf Dahrendorf, addressing the British Sociological Association last spring, upbraided his hearers not only for their "oppositionism" but also for their obsession with "sub-institutional aspects of non-economic life." He was touching upon the political and intellectual anxieties which afflict sociology today. The most basic argument bears upon the uses of "structure"—upon the senses in which we may say that relations between people and groups are "structured", repeated and institutionalised. In recent years the focus has shifted away from the macrocosm—from what could be conceived, and, where appropriate, measured, in objective terms; from what had, often prematurely, been taken to be a structure replete with "functions." The shift has been towards the study of "negotiated meanings" within localised transactions—a dedicated, sometimes cultish busy-work, breeding neologisms as self-serving and "professional" as the functionalism it sought to displace. In addition there has been a heady revival of the "Sociology of Knowledge"—coming from a legitimate, but soon over-heated, concern with how far different forms of knowledge are socially conditioned or "created."

BASIL BERNSTEIN in his third volume on the broad themes of *Class, Codes and Control*[1] tells how his own pioneering work in the sociology of education has been caught between these cross-fires. The strength of his work comes from his Durkheimian concern with the symbolic order and the modes of its reproduction and transmission—and from his conviction that we need to study problems rather than dissect approaches that stem from different political or philosophical presuppositions—let alone work for, or demand from others, a synthesis of approaches.

> We need to explore the ambiguities and contradictions upon which our symbolic arrangements ultimately rest: for in these ambiguities are both the seeds of change and man's creative acts. In order to do this we must be able to show how the distribution of power and the principles of control shape the structure of these symbolic arrangements, how they enter into our experience as interpretative procedures *and* the conditions of their repetition and change.

What his work, not itself free from ambiguities and untidiness, argues for is that "there is a

[1] *Class, Codes and Control.* Vol. 3. *Towards a Theory of Educational Transmissions.* By BASIL BERNSTEIN. Routledge, £3.50.

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causal relationship between the structure of social relationships and the structure of communication." And so "negotiated meanings presuppose a structure of meaning (and their history) wider than the area of negotiation." This is true, important, and remarkably clear.

For—it must be said—understanding Bernstein is itself a major enterprise: there are so many terms of art, dichotomies piled on to dichotomies, thoughts intricately interlaced with afterthoughts. Indeed we have it on his own authority that one of those most familiar with his work, the anthropologist Mary Douglas, feels she still does not understand one of the key terms in the repertoire. Perhaps to grasp the entire Bernstein production one would have, *per impossibile*, to be Bernstein himself.

He does his best to enlighten us. The volume opens with a sketch of an intellectual biography—how teaching experience fed back into his sociological education, how the "constraints" emphasised by Emile Durkheim helped him to the now well-known (and well-worn) distinction between elaborated and restricted speech codes: how, *via* various excursions (not yet complete), both conceptual and empirical, into socio-linguistics, he has become more and more involved in the fundamentals of pedagogy and the contents of curricula. It is a tall order—but not a tall story: rather there is an overtone of modest grappling with concepts and with the reality they are used to capture. Sometimes, too, there are signs that the effort has been stressful. It has certainly been open to misunderstandings, some, though not all, of which result from his tentative, sometimes painfully opaque prose. He also tends to develop dichotomies (such as, for example, "frame" and "classification" of educational knowledge) that are clearly useful tools for Bernstein but from which his readers (and would-be disciples) expect —without any encouragement from him—far too much.

What is more he offers no easy solutions to controversial issues—such as the senses in which working-class children may or may not be appropriately described as "disadvantaged." No doubt the cultural deprivations of working-class children have been "politically" overplayed—but they have also been as equally "politically" played down by the devotees of working-class culture. Bernstein sensibly concludes that the strengths of that culture, its "advantages" if you like, need to be mobilised if the real, relative social disadvantages of working-class children are to be mitigated. Many of his left-wing critics see in this (and in the tentative nature of his sociology of knowledge) an élitism that affronts their own view of what can and should be taught in schools —and how such teaching should proceed.

THIS IS THE SUBJECT of Professor Lawton's short book[2]: his main concern is what should or could go into a common curriculum but he also offers a pungent tour of the punditry of educational sociology.

The reader who is unschooled in these matters will be in for some surprises. He will learn how advanced thinkers, intoxicated by the sociology of knowledge, leap from a useful scrutiny of "what passes for knowledge in our society" into an easy dismissal of what they are pleased to call "high status knowledge" and of academic curricula "to the extent to which they are 'at odds' with daily life and common experience." Lawton dissents—asking what remains, on this view, of the historical search to define "worthwhile knowledge." He dissents too, from the extreme attacks on the arbitrariness and artificiality of subject barriers. To question whether a subject is "valid" is a useful exercise both for philosophy and for empirical enquiry. It is, however, too facile a ploy to leap from such enquiry to an assumption that subjects are "merely social constructs." For in the Alice-in-the-Underworld zones of educational sociology the cry is quickly raised— "off with the head" of social constructs!—especially if they are tainted by "high status knowledge." Lawton firmly remarks that such a ploy entails that "if the existence of subjects results in an unfair distribution of knowledge in society, then subjects should be abolished." With the final absurdity—the view that rationality itself is merely a convention—Professor Lawton is, rightly of course, even more impatient. The subversion of rationality by rational means is, for Professor Lawton, hardly credible. (Perhaps he is less inured to *chutzpah* than I am!) I can certainly admire the nerve of those who claim to find such extreme social lability in the standards whereby we distinguish truth from falsity—but I am not persuaded by them. It is a misfortune that this wafer-thin philosophical gambit, this intellectual mishmash, should find the place it does in the courses offered in colleges of education. But, since it has such a place, I hope Professor Lawton's simple but pained refutation will be widely diffused.

THE MISHMASH of the sociology of knowledge owes much to the legacy of Marx. It is one thing to parrot Marxian ideas—it is quite another to show, as Tom Bottomore[3] and

[2] *Class, Culture and the Curriculum.* By DENIS LAWTON. Routledge, £3.00, paper £1.25.
[3] *Marxist Sociology.* By TOM BOTTOMORE. Macmillan Press, £2.95, paper £1.25.

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Alan Swingewood[4] both seek to do, how complex the relations between Marxism and sociology have been. There is, obviously, an empirical thrust to Marxism (as there was in Marx's own work). But there is also a strand which claims so privileged an insight into historical truth that it has to ignore, and, indeed, despise, too detailed an account of the world as it is. Bottomore thus sees through the élitism of Lukács, Gramsci, Marcuse and other heroes of the radical Left. That élitism is a response to the non-revolutionary posture of the People—a posture which naughtily defies "historical truth." He sees, too, the anti-sociology into which they are betrayed. Nor does he spare them the revealing quotation from Lukács' polemic with Bukharin in 1925:

> . . . sociology cannot be restricted to a pure method, but develops into an independent science with its own goals. The dialectic can do without such independent substantive achievements. . . . The *totality* is the territory of the dialectic.

Bottomore himself seeks to rescue from Marxian "praxis" a mode for grappling with social change. It is a mode which admits of corrigibility and falsification of hypotheses—through a willingness, indeed, to face experience in a thoroughly Popperian fashion. I am not at all sure what the angry, self-assured prophet of Soho would have made of this—with his deep faith in his own purposes and his intolerant, often abusive line towards his rivals and followers. But surely it is an advance on worship of the "totality of the dialectic."

BRITISH WRITERS may bow respectfully to Lukács but they are more deferential to fact. Often indeed they seem obsessed by the "facts" about class—this is sometimes the case in the many able contributions to the book of essays edited by Dr Parkin.[5] I do not believe that the subject exhausts the range of scientifically or morally interesting topics. Certainly it is important. "All societies", says W. G. Runciman, in his contribution to the volume, "can be characterised in terms of the nature and degree of institutionalised differences among their members." He then distinguishes types of social stratification in different countries—arguing in a way that has irritated some Marxists that the variations, *e.g.* between the British, Swedish, and Soviet "types", "cannot be accounted for by reference to any one predominating variable but only by a reference to the working out of an interrelation between all those dimensions determined initially by the policies of the governing élite during the course of

[4] *Marx and Modern Social Theory*. By ALAN SWINGEWOOD. Macmillan Press, £6.95, paper £2.95.

[5] *The Social Analysis of Class Structure*. Edited by FRANK PARKIN. Tavistock, £2.80

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modernisation." Runciman is clear that these reflections, and the supporting analysis, do not constitute a "theory" in the mode of some codified natural science; nor do they provide an index for comparing the well-being of societies which have this, or that, type of stratification.

What is significant is that they point (not always specifically, and never exhaustively) beyond the confines of class towards the issues of bureaucratic power and of élite manipulation of authority. Dr Parkin, who contributes a tightly argued introduction to the volume, also widens the debate by comparing what he calls "strategies of social closure in class formation." Here, as in so much discussion of class and power, the ideas build upon Max Weber's sociology—in this instance Weber's thoughts on the "monopolisation of specific, usually economic, opportunities." There are practices of "exclusion" (*i.e.* modes of keeping "other" people's hands off one's own privileges) both within and between classes—and there are "solidarist" practices which function, again, at different levels, to redistribute privileges. "Industrial solidarism relies increasingly . . . upon the capacity for social and economic dislocation" —but

> there are few signs of any concerted attempt to use industrial leverage for any overt assault upon the institutional apparatus of exclusion itself—as against its mere redistributive consequences—a fact which might be thought to have some bearing on the stability of social inequality.

The irony of the word "mere" is, of course, unintended. "Mere" redistribution at a time of inflation and overall national impoverishment can hit hard—and not only at the nasty, hated "rich." I have to say also that Dr Parkin finds little space for reflection on freedom—on the contrary he observes rather fashionably, if heavily, that the liberal political order involves "an interpretation of distributive justice in which the rhetoric of individualism and the principles of class nomination obscure the processes of *de facto* collectivist exclusion and class reproduction."

MR WESTERGAARD AND MISS RESLER do not use the language of closure, but they would not find fault with this stern view of liberalism. Their frankly Marxist critique[6] insists that 20th-century advances, the strategies and stratagems of the Labour Party, the impact of two World Wars and of egalitarian ideology, the extension of welfare and of educational opportunity—

> all these and related developments in this century have so far done little to shift the balance of power and unequal life prospects significantly between classes. Their impact has been within boundaries largely fixed by the maintenance of private property, profit and market as key institutions controlling the conduct of society's affairs.

They are deeply saddened by the "tight institutionalisation of conflict" that has enabled capital to contain "the threat to it engendered by its internal contradictions." They are confident about what is needed:

> radical redistribution would require the dissolution of private property and therefore of capitalism itself. "Liberal" proposals, including policies suggested by the Labour Party, fall very short of that.

Their book is in large measure a mapping of the inequalities they detect. Indeed the central chapters of the book offer a long, well-presented march through the factual data on this subject—and even those who do not share the authors' unwaveringly Marxist perspectives will find in those chapters a mine of detailed and readable information. Much of the interpretation that accompanies the data discusses, and finds wanting, the theories that have been advanced to explain why the masses have not risen to claim their birthright of equality—why now, as in Lukács' time, the People are so regrettably "irrational."

Westergaard and Resler conclude by asserting their faith that "popular radicalisation . . . must come from manual labour." Capitalism plus sticking plaster will remain highly vulnerable to crisis—

> the outcome can be in doubt for a long time to come . . . the threat of dispossession would continue to hang over it. We ourselves hope that this threat will become reality.

There can, of course, be no "scientific" warrant for that hope. It is frankly political and must be treated as such. Since the hope (and the analysis) rests upon an overriding concern for the extension of equality, the key question must be whether the claims made for equality, or for any other social ideal, should be pressed, or pushed, *ruat caelum*. There is evidence, much of it elegantly summarised by Ralf Dahrendorf in his Reith Lectures, that even in a liberal democracy the socialist ideal (which is not solely Marxist in its provenance) can turn in upon itself and via "the alienation of enlightened reason" become illiberal, stale, and stagnant. (In the "People's Democracies" socialism, under the banner of Marx, is not quite devoid of further internal contradictions.) There, too, is the little matter of liberty (not just for the rich) which merits more attention than it gets from the enthusiasts for popular radicalisation. There is a haunting history of Marxist revolution, repression, and turmoil—from the Finland Station to Lisbon. All this, as Professor Bottomore reminds us, *still* "awaits" a Marxist explanation. How many more examples of "popular radicalism"—and the Commissar-State—do we need?

[6] *Class in a Capitalist Society*. By JOHN WESTERGAARD and HENRIETTA RESLER. Heinemann Educational, £5.50

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Poverty & Inequality

Who Are the Poor?—By R.A.B. Leaper

THE ATTITUDE of the mediaeval church to poverty was somewhat ambivalent. Poverty was a virtue in as much as it showed a proper disregard for material possessions; he who would embrace the fullness of commitment to the Christian ideal had to abandon all save the most elementary ties with worldly goods not because they were evil in themselves, but because they were a distraction from the ultimate good. The renunciation of the world was, however, a counsel of perfection as Christ's parable showed, and the vow of poverty is still a special pledge taken by members of religious communities. Most Christians committed to a belief that a transitory worldly life is only a preparation for eternal life have had to temper their daily wage-earning existence to their professed ideals. Since all material possessions came from God their disposal had to be governed by His laws. Hence the duty of charity, a composite of loving solidarity and material help to others, incumbent on all who had temporary control of earthly goods.

As R. H. Tawney and Amintore Fanfani taught all of us who read them in the 1930s, it was the rise of the Protestant Ethic at the time of the Reformation which reversed much Christian thinking about poverty and marked out the poor man with the stigma of failure. It was still a duty of the wealthy to help the poor, but the explanation of poverty was changed. From about the time of the outbreak of the Second World War to 1965 the words "Poverty" and "the poor" did not feature much in our social policy literature. They indeed took on a faintly anachronistic and condescending ring, and the literature around the new welfare state was not preoccupied with poverty by name, being much more concerned with positive and assertive statements on justice, equality of opportunity, and full employment. The rise in absolute living standards for the great majority of the population after 1945, and the euphoria of social reconstruction, restricted a consideration of poverty to a residual problem of a few, or as a reference point to a recent past, best forgotten by those glad that unemployment no longer threatened. Nostalgic writing of the 1930s only served to mark the contrast, even though rationing and drabness persisted as long as it did after 1945.

Poverty was "rediscovered" in Britain largely, it is said, through Peter Townsend and B. Abel-Smith's monograph *The Poor and the Poorest* (1965) and the two government department reports in 1966 and 1967 into the financial circumstances of pensioners and of families. Surveys, publications of all kinds, pressure groups and continued occasional writing on the subject of poverty have proceeded apace ever since 1965, and many of those originally associated with such work at the London School of Economics and later at Essex University feature prominently in recent literature on poverty—Richard Titmuss, Townsend, Abel-Smith, A. B. Atkinson, Chris Trinder (in Michael Young's *Poverty Report*), Tony Lynes. The child Poverty Action Group originated from a group of academics who subscribed to a programme sparked off by the new definitions of poverty and its identification among children in the Townsend/Abel-Smith study. Poverty was soon defined as a social evil by reference to the scale of what was first National Assistance and later Supplementary Benefits. Interestingly enough, while the life-style of an affluent society is derided (in theory at any rate) the fact of being in poverty is now regarded by such bodies as C.P.A.G. as a serious reproach to society. "In the last twenty-five years", writes Townsend in his preface to a collection of his recent papers and lectures,[1] "social policy in Britain has failed to make much impact on the related problems of poverty and social inequality." Townsend describes the two problems as "related"; they seem to have become synonymous in recent "poverty" literature. It is then only a short step from the evil of poverty to the evil of inequality and from these to abolishing inequality and so having a happier and more just society—Q.E.D. Townsend's collection is largely devoted to spying out evidence of inequality in our society, to preventing any temptation to be satisfied let alone smug about our social services, to upbraiding the Labour Party for not doing enough, to demanding more out of the common purse for the elderly, the disabled, in housing, education and social services, with greatly decreased provision of benefits on test of need or means. He is the expert bent on using his knowledge as our social conscience, warning of stigma, chiding society for insensitivity. Like the Victorians such as Samuel Smiles, poverty is an evil for him but

[1] *Sociology and Social Policy*. By PETER TOWNSEND. Allen Lane, £8.50.

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so defined for very different reasons. Townsend seems much less happy when he deals with social obligations or with the administration of contributions to social security rather than its benefits, as his rather thin chapter on "The Difficulties of Negative Income Tax" seems to show.

BUT WE MUST pause here. We have slipped into accepting that poverty equals inequality and that the latter is a widespread and evil feature of our society whose elimination must be a main object of social and economic policy. A. B. Atkinson deals with *The Economics of Equality*[2], admitting that the definition of poverty is a tricky business, rejecting "the absolute poverty approach" of Rowntree in Britain or Orshansky in the U.S.A. (Atkinson's frequent introduction of American comparative material often seems to confuse rather than clarify his arguments). He follows Abel-Smith and Townsend in accepting the eligibility point for supplementary benefits as a *poverty line*. There is danger of sleight of hand here. We may campaign constantly to raise the Supplementary Benefit level to an adequate comparison with both cost of living and average wages. Each time we do so, we automatically place more people in poverty if they fall below this level, which is a reproach to society where most people (up till our present inflation crisis) have comparatively better living levels than before. Poverty therefore has come to be defined in relative terms and within a given socio-political society at a particular point in time. From this will come a preoccupation with inequality, alleged or real, and a campaign to reduce or eliminate it. In a thorough chapter on "Income Distribution" Atkinson shows just how complex and fragmentary is the statistical evidence on the precise meaning of inequality and he explores the question of distribution of life-scale incomes. To those questions the Diamond Commission returns in its recent report.[3]

MICHAEL YOUNG'S annual *Poverty Report*[4] consists of an introduction by the Editor, a long section on changing government policies by Chris Trinder of Essex University, an account of surveys of poor people in London and in Dortmund with inconclusive comparative comments: "The book shows . . . just how complex even in concept, let alone in action, the task of abolishing poverty is." The report claims that we must "get the balance right on six different but crucial relativities"; these are of benefits to average earnings, to inflation, to take-up of entitlement, of children to parents, between the sexes and to national income. "If we concentrate on programmes concerned with those relativities we could wipe out poverty within a period of five years or so." Trinder's comments on the low paid, the unemployed, the retired and on the non-implementation so far of the recommendations of the Finer Report make it clear that poverty is considered as essentially a relative concept, related to ideas of an involuntary inability to control one's own living standards in relation to what is generally regarded as normal within the society in which one lives.

All of this brings us back to the question of "How much inequality?"—which is the title of a short IEA study by George Polanyi and John B. Wood.[5] They question the validity of the evidence and assumptions made by Atkinson in *Unequal Shares*, in which he claimed that "there has been no marked decline in the degree of inequality" and that such redistribution as there has been is "not between the rich and the poor, but between the very rich and the rich." After subjecting those generalisations to close and critical scrutiny the IEA study concludes that our information is incomplete and misleading, and that some of Atkinson's conclusions are theoretical and meaningless. Those who are concerned to see the fulfilment of Marxian prophecies about capitalist society must show that the poor get poorer (however you define them); and those concerned to show that life has got better in Britain since the war must show an improvement in living standards generally leading to a commitment to concentrate attention on those still in comparative want—and deserving of help (however you define that).

Since social security benefits are meant to compensate for loss or interruption of earnings (apart from Family Allowances), we have not paid out of public funds for direct income maintenance for those in work since the end of the Speenhamland system down to 1971. The relative improvement in Supplementary Benefit rates (though small) and the persistence of low pay in some jobs led to the anomaly that many at work earned less than some Supplementary Benefit claimants. Hence came the introduction of the Family Income Supplement, at first attacked and derided by C.P.A.G. and claimants unions, but since accepted as at any rate of some limited value, and continued by the present Labour Government until a more comprehensive family

[2] *The Economics of Inequality*. By A. B. ATKINSON. Oxford University Press, £5.50, paper, £1.90. *Unequal Shares*. Penguin, 50p.

[3] *Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth*. Report No. 1, Cmnd. 6171. H.M.S.O., £3.10.

[4] *Poverty Report*. Edited by MICHAEL YOUNG. Temple Smith, £4, paper £2.60.

[5] *How Much Inequality?* By GEORGE POLANYI and JOHN B. WOOD. Institute of Economic Affairs, £1.

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income scheme can be introduced. Low pay has excited less concern than it should have done, even from Trades Unions and the Labour Party, and we have all been too anxious to maintain pay differentials whenever rises have been claimed.

FRANK FIELD, SECRETARY of C.P.A.G., produced in 1973 (his collaborators include Atkinson) the first popular survey of low pay.[6] Other surveys have followed and a Low Pay Unit has been set up. The four-week rule and the Wage Stop have now been either abolished or fallen into disuse. Growing unemployment made the first rule inoperable and a gradual rise in low wages, coupled marginally with the effect of F.I.S., has made the second rule hardly worth the trouble. Nevertheless an important point of principle has been changed by abolishing the Wage Stop, and it must have been a near thing when the Supplementary Benefits Commission decided to recommend its abolition in 1975.

The immediate preoccupation of the employment and the social security services must be how to deal with the growing number of unemployed whose number in August 1975 had already passed the emotion-laden million mark. It does not much help someone who is out of a job to argue whether his plight is due to wage-push inflation and to the fact that his products have priced themselves out of the market, or whether ruthless employers are using dismissals as a means of keeping business afloat. Dennis Marsden and Euan Duff describe in words and photographs in a recent Penguin book the personal feeling and attitude of being workless.[7] The book is an impressionistic record of some workless people rather than an analysis of unemployment. The introduction deals with attitudes towards work in society, and there is the familiar slighting reference to what is called "the Protestant work ethic." The belief in the obligation of the citizen to support himself and to contribute to society is, of course, not simply Protestant, nor Christian generally. It is a strongly-held belief in the Soviet Union, for example, as even a cursory glance at the Soviet "pensions" system shows. Anyone who has visited Russia must have been impressed by the Communist insistence on both the right and the obligation to work productively. Remarkable work in rehabilitation and prosthesis is carried out there in earnest of the need to work. Marsden carries on the discussion by referring frequently to the "social contract" between society and the individual for his right to work. Unfortunately the phrase is now discredited by being attached

[6] *Low Pay*. By FRANK FIELD. Arrow Books, 50p.
[7] *Workless*. By DENNIS MARSDEN and EUAN DUFF. Penguin, £1.50.

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to a failed incomes policy. However, sensitive and compassionate descriptions of how it feels to be workless are important reading in our present economic plight.

UNEMPLOYMENT IS one of several topics dealt with in Rudolf Klein's *Inflation and Priorities* for the Centre for Studies in Social Policy.[8] He is particularly pessimistic about the future of anyone above 55 years who loses his job—and considers the alternatives of subsiding jobs (already increasingly practised in 1975) or of premature retirement, commenting that "someone who loses his job at 55 may run up a very considerable bill in social security benefits of various kinds." This latest survey by Rudolf Klein and his collaborators is a salutory reminder that "the combination of non-growth and rapid inflation has created an entirely new context for the debate about public spending." It was Shirley Williams who asked the national conference of the British Association of Social Workers for help in deciding on priorities in social expenditure at a time of galloping inflation and low productivity. Unfortunately her challenge was not taken up seriously by B.A.S.W., who escaped into the easy rhetoric of demanding no reduction in social expenditure in any direction. But our social policies must in a time of inflation give priority to those most vulnerable to rapidly rising prices. The money for this must entail reduction in other directions. This is the dilemma which Rudolf Klein's study tackles bravely and with good documentation, dealing in turn with unemployment, personal social services, housing, schools, transport, law and order. Is there still a great deal of wealth unjustly held by a few in an unequal society, which if tapped and taxed could get us out of the uncomfortable situation of having to halt or reduce desirable social expenditure? Klein comments:

> The customary antithesis between private consumer expenditure and public authority expenditure (with the unspoken assumption, often, that the former goes to finance the purchase of colour television sets, while the latter goes to save old ladies from starvation) is far too simple, and a policy which squeezes the former in order to finance the latter could produce some unexpected and undesirable surprises.

Is it, however, the case that a few have very large shares both of incomes and of wealth, so that the elderly who are poor by our previous definition could be removed from their condition by heavier taxation for which there is ample wealth waiting in our unequal society? A preliminary look at the first report of the Diamond Royal Commission on the distribution of income and wealth gives no slick and easy answer. Its conclusions are likely to be debated for some time to come. It makes clear that changes in the distribution of *income* have not been very profound over the past 15 years, but there has been a continuing trend towards greater equality in the distribution of *wealth*. In 1967 the Blue books of Central Government statistics were discontinued, so that the Diamond Commission report (and its promised subsequent publications) carry the analysis forward since then. In 1972–73 the statistics in the Report show that the top 50% of income earners got about three-quarters of total personal income before tax, and the top 10% got about a quarter of the total. Direct taxation on the incomes of the top 10% was not very great in percentage terms, as it reduced their share from 26·9 to 23·6 after tax. Indirect taxes, which affect us all and take no account of individual incomes, appear almost to offset the equalising effect of direct taxation. However, pensions, health services, and other social services do effect a redistribution of income to an important extent. It is not clear to me how far this re-distributive effect can be measured between the different statistical groups in the population.

When it comes to deal with *wealth* the Report shows the differences accountable to the life-cycle of earnings, expenditure, investment and accumulation followed by stagnation or reduction. This is an important corrective to crude statements about accumulated wealth but it does not alone account for still fairly wide disparities in wealth between different sections of the population. While wealth may represent security (in much more than average comfort for some) it is clearly necessary to consider how marketable it is. Dwellings constitute the most important single form of wealth, being 38% of the 1973 total in the Report. Wealth is much less evenly distributed than income, and allowing for the impossibility of the poorest people accumulating wealth, surely more social analysis of spending and saving habits needs to be made. The inclusion of the accrued value of pension rights (a form of non-marketable wealth) in the Report makes a considerable change in distribution of wealth calculations—the share of the top 1% falls from 28% to 17% and the share of the bottom 80% goes up from 17% to 40%. The importance of maintaining improved social security for old age at the expense of disposable earnings seems proven, even if it is the most difficult idea to sell to earners. The legitimacy of limiting increases in earnings, above all at present among the wealthier, and in effect limiting long-maintained differentials also seems justified. This is a policy

[8] *Inflation and Priorities*. By RUDOLF KLEIN. Centre for Studies in Social Policy, £2.50.

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which the Civil Service does not seem to apply to its own staff, and in the light of this the recent increase which M.P.s voted themselves, linking their future pay to the Civil Service, seems to have created a vested interest link between legislators and administrators.

TO RETURN to the Diamond Commission, the report seems to provide a good starting point for a continuing review of the distribution of incomes and of wealth. Those who are committed to increased equality of incomes will have noted progress along their advocated road, but the easy removal of poverty by reference to inequality seems an over-simplification. The Report itself points to wide gaps in reliable information about the distribution of wealth among individuals. None of the arguments seem to take adequate account of where bargaining power really lies in our society, or to what extent wealth investment in public institutions really represents a shift in capital power. Polanyi and Woods' doubts and questioning are still valid and Atkinson's modification of his first statements on "unequal shares" was required. For neither them nor the common reader has the Diamond Report given unequivocal and clear answers to the questions of poverty and inequality in British society. Unfortunately that will not stop many commentators from selectively using the Report to prove political points—nor will many resist the temptation to evade the stark need to produce more and distribute more at greater personal sacrifice if we are to maintain our social services. Poverty remains an imprecise concept, loosely used in the rhetoric of social debate, and the study of inequality requires more precise analysis. Conspicuous inequality may be thoroughly distasteful to many of us, but the abolition of inequality has not been proved to bring with it the disappearence of poverty.

The Debate over "Secularization"

Religion, Society, & Faith—By BRYAN WILSON

TO ALMOST EVERYONE except the experts, secularization is a self-evident process in contemporary society. Religion is on the wane. The experts—"sociologists of religion" and those theologians who concede that religion is in some sense a social phenomenon—are quite properly disposed to doubt common sense testimony. While the decline of religion is taken for granted by the general public, the experts keep debate alive, marshalling all sorts of arguments and some sorts of evidence, to show that things are not quite what they seem.[1] For some of them keeping the debate going appears to be almost as good as keeping religion going. With others, argumentative vigour stems directly from personal faith, and their need for reassurance that religion is not in decline. And faith may be reinforced by other considerations—influence, jobs, status, and self-respect.

The contending experts do not fall into readily defined opposing camps. The minds at work are too subtle, and the arguments too devious, for mere bigotry, and even the toughest disputants sometimes manifest ambivalence. Some, who have wanted to expunge the term *secularization* from sociological dictionaries because of its ideological connotations, have subsequently found that they cannot manage without it. Others allude to the "secularization myth" as analogous to the "scientific myth", and suppose that this disposes of the social phenomenon of secularization (and of science?).[2] Committed Christians are reduced to citing evidence of "on campus" cults of oriental origin to bolster their claim that religion is not dying, only changing.[3] But, believing themselves to have proved the wider case, they may, of course, have lost their own (Christian) souls.

Nor are those who agree with the man-in-the-street about "the decline of religion" always wholly pleased by their conclusions. Clergy, who generally acknowledge the decline of institutional Christianity, obviously do so in despair. But even sociologists, who are often thoroughly secular men, recognise that religion functioned as a support for civic order and the socialisation of

[1] A significant collection of papers devoted to this subject is included in *Religion and Social Change*, Acts of the 13th International Conference on the Sociology of Religion, held in Spain in September, 1975, Édition du Secrétariat CISR, 39 rue de la Monnaie, 59042 Lille.

[2] This approach is taken by Peter E. Glasner, "Idealization and the Social Myth of Secularization", in *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain*. No. 8. Edited by MICHAEL HILL. SCM Press, £2.80.

[3] Father Andrew Greeley, S.J., *The Persistence of Religion*, SCM Press (1973).

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the young, and some of them lament the lack of a suitable substitute. Religion, for them, appears socially indispensable but intellectually untenable. No one expressed this dilemma more eloquently than Emile Durkheim, the evidence of whose lifetime of wrestling with the subject is now conveniently drawn together in translation in a new selection of his work.[4] Durkheim's preoccupation was social cohesion. In tribal societies, cohesion had been a latent function of religion. Now that religion was defunct, could not sociology prescribe rational means by which society might obtain benefits similar to those that religion, a non-rational agency (an agency not designed for the ends that it fulfilled), had provided in tribal societies? Or was latency (and so, implicitly, irrationality) itself a condition of successful functioning?

DURKHEIM REGARDED advanced society as effectively secular; primitive societies as essentially religious. Secularization came about with structural differentiation in the development of a role-articulated social system. He was obsessed with religion—or more accurately, with morality. But in this he was not alone among the classical sociologists. Almost all of them took "the decline of religion" to be a fundamental social process.

The secularization thesis is of the bed-rock of sociological theory. It was the single most important thesis advanced by Comte; it was an implicit concomitant of the historical process for Marx; it informed the evolutionist perspective of Veblen; and it was a process of disillusionment vital to man's social and psychological health for Freud. If, for all of these, the concept carried ideological overtones, that could scarcely be said of Durkheim; nor of Max Weber, who gave the thesis its greatest historical and cultural specificity. Was sociology, then, just a fashionable vogue in 19th-century historiography, a by-product of rationalist optimism? Or were the early sociologists really identifying a fundamental social process that called for recognition and explanation?

THE SECULARIZATION THESIS may be propounded as a long-run or a short-run phenomenon—concerned either with the total spectrum of man's religions, or narrowly with one particular (and usually the Christian) tradition. The early sociologists were not parochial men. They documented the "disenchantment of the world": the evolution of "matter-of-fact" habits of thought; the displacement of local magic by an increasingly universal ethic; the supersession of immanent spirits by increasingly transcendental and abstract conceptions of the supernatural—to a point where, finally, the supernatural virtually disappears from the everyday world and nothing is sacred. In this sense, Weber saw Judaism as a secularizing agency, and Christianity (and particularly Protestantism) as a demystifying force at other times and in other places. Even theologians, learning late what some sociologists could have shown them earlier, eventually pronounced that man had come of age, and some even celebrated—and not, for example in the case of Harvey Cox, without a touch of obscenity—secularization as the real mission of Christianity.

As a general concomitant of social development, long-run secularization should be evident, however variable its patterns and however uneven its incidence, in all but the most static societies. It should be most conspicuous in advanced societies as they develop co-ordinated, rational structures and procedures, and espouse instrumental goals. It is on this narrow front that the thesis has been most vigorously contested.

One familiar argument, deployed both by Mr Glasner and by Robin Gill,[5] begins by observing that the concept of secularization implies that society was once more religious than it is now. Indeed it does! But when opponents slip into describing that more religious age as "an age of faith", and assume that such an age was 12th- and 13th-century Europe, they father on to most advocates of the secularization thesis more than they themselves have claimed. They then accuse the sociologists of confusing the strength of the institutional Church with widespread and strong religious commitment diffused through the whole population—a condition of "religious homogeneity" as Glasner inelegantly puts it. But even a historian like Peter Laslett—writing of a much later time and going further than most sociologists would care to go—stops short of "religious homogeneity" when he writes:

> All our ancestors were literal Christian believers, all of the time . . . the intellectuals and the publicly responsible looked on the Christian religion as the explanation of life, and on religious service as its proper end. Not everyone was equally devout, of course, and it would be simple-minded to suppose that none of these villagers ever had their doubts. Much of their devotion must have been formal, and some of it mere conformity. But their world was a Christian world and their religious activity was spontaneous, not forced on them from above.[6]

Those propounding the secularization thesis need not make such strong assertions as these. Those acquainted with the persistence of magic, folk religion, and mediaeval and later sectarianism,

[4] *Durkheim on Religion.* Edited by W. S. F. PICKERING. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £6.95.

[5] *The Social Context of Theology.* By ROBIN GILL. A. R. Mowbray & Co., £6.50, paper £3.75.

[6] Peter Laslett, *The World We have Lost* (1965).

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will certainly not do so. All that needs be asserted is that society was much more preoccupied with supernatural beliefs and practices, and accorded them more significance than it does now. Secularization is the process in which religious thinking, practices, and institutions lose their social significance. For this argument one need not distinguish magic from religion—both were at issue as variant forms of supernaturalism. It is only because Christianity was effective in eventually eliminating most indigenous magic and folk religion (at least in Western Europe) that the debate on contemporary secularization focuses primarily on Christianity.

AT ONE LEVEL, church statistics on membership and attendance tell the story of Christian decline.[7] If one looks further, the fall in the number of ordinations, both Anglican and Catholic, the world-wide diminution of vocations in Catholic orders, and the excess of defaulters over new entrants—all confirm the picture. Careful analysis of church membership figures in Britain is now providing a new and devastating index of secularization.[8] Of course, statistics are no more than one index, and one must recognise that church membership and religious observance have different meanings not only in different societies, but also from one denomination to another (and this because denominations themselves arose at different stages of the secularization process). In new societies, of which the United States is the most important, role specialisation, a high rate of geographic mobility, social anonymity, and isolation make "going to church" a symbolic gesture of attachment to that now largely fictive entity, the community. It is a gesture which, in settled societies, people do not need, since the church is not the surrogate community.

IT IS A PLAUSIBLE HYPOTHESIS that as countries undergo industrialisation and urbanisation, commitment to the supernatural will become socially less significant. Some individuals will continue to seek salvation through supernatural agencies, of course, and sociological knowledge is now such that we can indicate within which social groups particular soteriologies are likely

[7] *The Social Psychology of Religion.* By MICHAEL ARGYLE and BENJAMIN BEIT-HALLAHMI. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £5.95, paper, £2.95. (This work is a revision and up-dating of Argyle's earlier study, *Religious Behaviour.*)

[8] A new study still in the press, by Robert Currie and Alan Gilbert, *Churches and Churchgoers* (provisional title), Oxford University Press, provides the most thorough analysis yet available.

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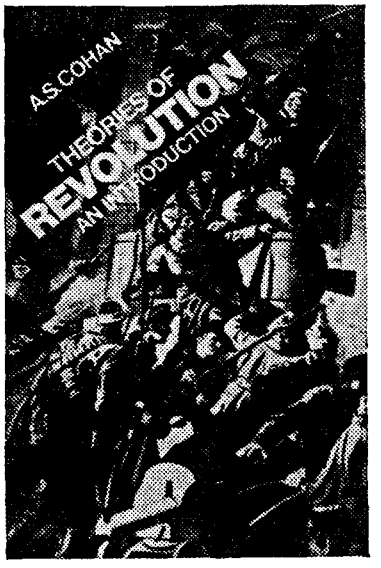
Dr Cohan is a lecturer in the Department of Politics, University of Lancaster.



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to have most appeal. The choice is wide and, since the intimations of both the general culture and the local community are now weak, it is usually personal and virtually unconstrained. In choosing, individuals get the support of a new group, of like-minded and self-selected others. This is increasingly the case even if the choice is for orthodoxy in its most conservative tradition. In a pluralist context established churches, when their social support fades, become merely privileged sects. Such is the uncertainty that even within the established churches there is a variety of styles, and no one need be true to the past, or even much constrained by it. Outside, there are other innovative cults, as well as conservative and restorative sects.

The modern world has a supermarket of faiths; received, jazzed-up, homespun, restored, imported and exotic. But all of them co-exist only because the wider society is so secular, because they are relatively unimportant consumer items. The once "God-given" social order, underpinned by religious sanctions, required that religion be controlled, and sects were licensed or prohibited. In the consciously-planned, and rationally and technically constructed social system, which we increasingly approximate, religion simply does not matter socially, however much his own religion may matter to the individual, or the debate about religion may matter to the expert. As man-made facilities supply the greater part of social need, so the rhythms of life depend less directly on nature and on the divine. Nowhere is this more evident than in Japan, in which the parish organisation of Shinto shrines has now fallen into decay, while the Buddhist temples, used mainly for funeral services, lose their clientele. Of 80,000 shrines in Japan, today only 17,000 have a priest in residence. Only about 10% of the population is engaged in religious activities—and many of these are in the new sects. Ancestor worship continues, but even here there are important changes as migration occurs, households break up, and even this pattern of highly privatised worship itself begins to lose significance.[9]

SECULARIZATION takes on different patterns in different cultures. In Eastern Europe, where official atheism defines a very different social space for religious institutions, the state promotes secularity. Clergy and religious men, in consequence, are aware of a threat to their faith and their church, and are steeled to resist it. Again, the oppressed often take refuge in religious faith, ritual, or institutions, and when the régime is actively hostile, the churches may become not only a facility for the exercise of a private commitment to an alternative source of authority to that of the state but, for some, a political surrogate and a base for resistance. The politicisation of religion (as Bohdan R. Bociurkiw calls it in "Religious Dissent and the Soviet State"[10]) may then bring the churches close to becoming what the state says they are, subversive agencies. With such diverse motivations for religious commitment, the high figures (for what they are worth) for religious activity in some East European countries suggest that secularization is more a consequence of structural change in society than of political re-education. Ethel and Stephen Dunn say of Soviet Russia, in their

[9] Three recent studies of religious life in Japan make these points clear. Robert J. Smith's *Ancestor Worship in Contemporary Japan* (Stanford University Press, $12.00) is a meticulous study of the continuities and changes in family devotions. Kiyomi Morioka's *Religion in Changing Japanese Society* (Univeristy of Tokyo Press, Yen 4,800), covers the effect on Shinto, Buddhism and Christianity of demographic change and urban immigration. A general overview is provided in a short study by Fujio Ikado, *The Religious Background of Japanese Culture* (Association for International Education in Japan, 1973).

[10] Edited by BOHDAN R. BOCIURKIW and JOHN W. STRONG. *Religion and Atheism in the USSR and Eastern Europe*. Macmillan, £10. The book includes papers on all the Eastern European countries, including Albania.

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essay "Religious Behaviour and Socio-Cultural Change in the Soviet Union", that

> the most obvious threat to the believer today is not so much a particular political system to be viewed as the Antichrist as an inexorable process taking place all over the world—secularization.

NO CULTURAL SITUATION is so uncomplicated that it is possible to predict from evidence of industrialisation and urbanisation the exact consequences for religious belief, practice, and institutions. Institutions, particularly when they are entrenched in law, property, and physical structures, show considerable capacity to survive. Mediaeval cathedrals, built when a much larger part of the gross national product was devoted to supernatural concerns than is today the case, survive into the industrial age. But in contemporary affluent society there is scarcely enough money even for their repair; and their social significance, like that of the famous shrines in Japan, is as tourist attractions rather than as places of worship.

In Britain, as in Japan, the priests who once manipulated supernatural power become mere custodians of ancient monuments, paid perhaps less than the janitors in commercial buildings. Religious rituals often provide occasions for religious sentiment, but perhaps sometimes only for sentimentality: and the growing proportion of purely secular marriages in Britain suggests that even sentiment diminishes. Actual belief (if we again refer to Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi) appears to decline, and belief is only the most conspicuous aspect of supernaturalist thinking. The rational structure of society itself precludes much indulgence in supernaturalist thinking in the normal performance of social roles.

What then, ask those who reject the secularization thesis, about the exciting things that are happening within the older denominations, and the proliferation of new cults?

To give them extra fuel for their argument, we may also remind them that in addition to these innovations, there are a number of fast-growing conservative sects. (For some reason, enthusiasts for the persistence of religion are more impressed by a few thousand Hare Krishna converts than by two million Jehovah's Witnesses—perhaps because the Witnesses were clearly outside the Pale, when there was still a Pale: and the stigma lingers on.) If we concede the abundance of sects and cults, does this create any embarrassment for those who support the secularization thesis? I hardly think so. These movements thrive precisely because the culture is secularized: in a religious society they could scarcely arise, or, if

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arising, survive. They are themselves a religious response to the secularization of society, but they are essentially a marginal phenomenon. That the world-wide high-growth rate of Jehovah's Witnesses—perhaps the fastest growing sect—is no counter-example to this is made clear in the latest and most detailed of contemporary sectarian studies, which impresses by its intellectual integrity and impartiality.[11] And in any case, as James Beckford points out, the "movement enthusiastically 'promotes' or 'sponsors' de-mystification."

NOT ALL MINORITY MOVEMENTS promote de-mystification, of course, and the oriental cults re-introduce magical, mystical, and meditational styles to world-weary young people who are looking for escape from the rationally constructed maze of modern life. The sects in the Christian tradition often represent the continuance, and even the reinforcement, of Protestant asceticism. It is fashionable to see these sectarians (with Mansell Pattison) as authoritarian personalities, though I would question the validity of this scale of measurement.[12] Sectarians are, in fact, in protest against the world, and in particular against its hedonism, worldliness, and corruption, and perhaps only latently and unconsciously against the structure of rational order, the spirit of which, indeed, they emulate in the running of their own affairs.[13] The new cults, in contrast, and especially those from the East, offer a return to the enchanted garden. Some promote Eastern asceticism to unlock all mysteries. But beyond there is a promise of sensual ecstasy that is utterly opposed to the routine of everyday Western life, and to the soteriology of Christian sects. Thus, when A. C. Bhaktivedanta began his 1966 campaign among the San Francisco hippies he echoed the drug culture with his poster slogan: STAY HIGH ALL THE TIME WITH HARE KRISHNA. How different from the occidental enthusiasm for Theosophy and Vedanta half-a-century earlier which appealed to a relatively intellectual class of the middle-aged and affluent (as Zaretsky and Leone point out in their massive compendium). Today's cults appeal to the new leisure class, the student drop-outs, who are socially uncommitted. More than 90% of American Hare Krishna followers are under 25 (according to J. Stillson Judah[14]). But the new class is not intellectual: they are in flight from the intellect by way of the mindless mantra.

These religious counter-cultural phenomena have their secular equivalents in the protest songs, the demo, the football hooliganism, the drug culture, and the hippy commune. There is a widespread demand for new power and for a new sense of authenticity, which may be sought in the self (*via* drugs, Spirit-infilling, meditation, or yoga); from charismatic figures (Maharij Ji, Mr Moon, or the Bay City Rollers); or from the primitive, the lower-class, and the oppressed (as in Soul music, the Afro hair-do, and the dominance of impulse over constraint). Where it does not come from is native tradition and the cultural heritage.

THIS WIDESPREAD RESTIVENESS has affected Christianity itself, at the fringe in the Jesus Movement, and nearer the centre with Charismatic Renewal and Pop religion. Charismatic Renewal is manifestly a search for a different source of power which is neither the Bible nor the Church. Its legitimacy is felt rather than understood. There is, just as in the Pop culture, a demand for spontaneity, immediacy, ego-gratification, and a distrust of the mind. The emphasis is all on the Spirit, but the influence is also from the secular. Religion has learned and borrowed from the entertainment world and not only from the commercial exploitation of religious themes as in *Jesus Christ Superstar* and the big shows, although (as emerges from Tony Jasper's perhaps rather superficial coverage of the scene) that also has occurred.[15]

ONE ASPECT OF SECULARIZATION important in the Christian tradition has as yet received only scant attention: religion's loss of moral control. In the Church, de-moralisation has occurred in more than one sense. Moral theologians appear to have had an earlier intuitive grasp of that recent bogus sociological discovery, "labelling theory": to reduce sin, the quicker way is not to redeem sinners, but to decide that what they

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[11] *The Trumpet of Prophecy: A Sociological Study of Jehovah's Witnesses.* By JAMES A. BECKFORD. Blackwell, £6.00.

[12] A general psychological interpretation of fundamentalist Protestantism is provided by E. Mansell Pattison, "Ideological Support for the Marginal Middle Class: Faith Healing and Glossolalia." *Religious Movements in Contemporary America.* Edited by IRVING I. ZARETSKY and MARK P. LEONE. Princeton University Press, $25.00, £14.60.

[13] For an account of the rational procedures of some Christian sects, see Bryan Wilson, "American Religious Sects in Europe." *Superculture: American Popular Culture and Europe.* Edited by C. W. E. BIGSBY. Elek, £4.95.

[14] J. Stillson Judah, "The Hare Krishna Movement" in Zaretsky and Leone, *Religious Movements.* . . . Judah's paper like many others in this compendium is descriptive rather than analytical, but provides a great deal of basic information.

[15] *Jesus in a Pop Culture.* By TONY JASPER. Collins Fontana, £2.00, paper 40p.

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are doing is not, "after all", *really* sin. So it was with birth control. Fifty years ago the Church of England was unequivocal: this was sin. Today it is sin no longer. At a different level, the Church could once prevail upon secular authorities to regard as crime what the Church held to be sin. Today, the Church itself applauds the distinction that reduces its own moral authority—as in the matter of homosexuality. So we see the secularization of the Church's moral concerns, as it follows the trend (so well documented by Christie Davies among legislators[16]) from moralistic to causalistic thinking. Put in other words, that is a shift from deontological moral theorising, which was often religiously legitimated, to teleological moral thinking, with its utilitarian and rationalistic origins. Some enterprising researcher might do for the work of moral theologians what Mr Davies has done for politicians.

THE SECULARIZATION debate is partly about terminology. Some writers, and Robin Gill is sometimes guilty, fail to realise that secularization is a process pertaining to total societies, with inevitably uneven incidence among sub-groups and individuals. Functionalists extend Durkheim illicitly to argue that since religion functioned to create social cohesion, whatever fulfils that function is to be regarded as religion. Those who define religion as man's "ultimate concerns" can make religion of sexual behaviour or family life. Sociologists do not normally tolerate loose definitions; and although religion is a complex, many-sided, and culturally diverse phenomenon, there is no reason—casuistry apart—not to define it, in broad substantive terms, as those beliefs and procedures that relate to non-empirical ends and to supernatural categories.

Can there be any disadvantage to sociology in taking as a point of departure the understanding of the man in the street? If we do, we shall perhaps grasp what he means when he says (as according to Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi he does increasingly) that religion is losing its social influence.

[16] *Permissive Britain: Social Change in the Sixties and Seventies.* By CHRISTIE DAVIES. Pitman, £3.25.

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THE PUBLICATION OF Maurice Freedman's translation of Marcel Granet's *The Religion of the Chinese People* (Blackwell, £6·00) coincided with his tragically sudden death this summer. Freedman intended his scholarly Introduction and his meticulous editing of Granet's short but masterly synoptic study to be not only a contribution to the sociology of Chinese religion (although it certainly is that) but also, and with characteristic loyalty and generosity of spirit, as a tribute to an early master in the field whose work he wished to see available to the English reading public. Freedman's Introduction makes it clear that Granet was inspired not only by China but by the prospect, through the study of China, of contributing to a more general humanism. It is a spirit no less pervasive in Freedman's own anthropological and sinological work.

Remembering Karl Mannheim

By David Martin

THE CAREER OF KARL MANNHEIM was one of intellectual and social migration. He left Admiral Horthy's Hungary in 1920 for Weimar Germany, and then left Frankfurt in 1933 for the London School of Economics. Even there he did not entirely hit it off with Morris Ginsberg, and in 1945 made his last and shortest migration to the London University's Institute of Education. Two years later he died aged fifty-three. Plainly, Karl Mannheim was a marginal man by origin and by destiny. His birthplace was Budapest, his identity Jewish; his mother Hungarian, his father German, his adopted culture British. Few men can have been better prepared for the study of the social roots of culture or more open to the notion that truth is what works in context, and that what you "know" depends on where and who you are in time and social space. Indeed, few men can have been so easily tempted by the idea that the guides out of the morass of cultural relativism were to be found in the "free-floating intelligentsia."

Always he walked the intellectual margins, fascinated and fascinating, but not belonging. He was friendly for a while with the Frankfurt School but too socially detached to be part of it. Though he had a pragmatic notion of truth he did not conform to the Frankfurt School's demand for truth to be forged in praxis. He was Marxistic in approach, and yet by seeing ideology everywhere rather than specifically located in the contradictions of bourgeois society he defused the radical concept of ideology and made it useless as a weapon of intellectual assault. When in England he was friendly with conservative and Christian intellectuals like T. S. Eliot and John Middleton Murry and with their little group called "The Moot"; but he was not spiritually one of them. The point of overlap was his sensitivity towards the possible role of religion in underpinning and informing humane values; but his real intellectual thrust lay in providing a theory for Labour's post-war planning.

For a while after his death Karl Mannheim was largely forgotten. People knew he had existed, of course, and some busied themselves with his literary remains, yet he was not a lively intellectual presence. The books lay in the dark green graveyard provided by the series he himself founded: "The International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction." The sub-discipline of the sociology of knowledge by which he was best known appeared more grandiose in conception than impressive in performance. Things like Mannheim's seminal essay on "Conservative Thought" or his work on rival generational styles looked crammed with promise, but in the end failed to deliver. The empiricist mood eschewed the philosophical abyss of social and epistemological relativism and followed the American road to factuality.

THEN IN THE mid-1960s came the erosion of positivistic confidence, or rather the erosion of some people's confidence in positivism. Students and their radical mentors perched unhappily over the abyss of relativism while they proclaimed their own unique and varied access to truth. The intellectuals went in for the Mannheimian "free float", embracing the universality of ideological delusion and their own prophetic deliverance from it. Mannheim's preoccupation with the existential roots of knowledge came to seem more relevant. Indeed, even those not enamoured of the raging fashionable doubt about the possibility of personal and substantial truth might ask themselves what were the existential roots of lack of "Knowledge." Maybe, too, something of the febrile atmosphere of Weimar returned.

MESSRS ROUTLEDGE & KEGAN PAUL had for some while received little return on their investment in Mannheim's work but little by little he crept back. No doubt this book[1] under the Routledge imprint is part of a minor

[1] *The Sociology of Karl Mannheim.* By GUNTER REMMLING. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £4.95.

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revival. Its excellent bibliography suggests as much; Remmling's book is the first work in English language which is fairly and squarely on Mannheim since J. J. Macquet's *The Sociology of Knowledge* was published in 1951. Even Macquet divided his attention between Mannheim and Pitirim Sorokin, and perhaps the conjunction of Mannheim and Sorokin suggests another point. Certain large figures are from time to time imported into the Anglo-Saxon world and bring with them the alien concern with macro-problems of culture. They grapple with problems of a magnitude and uncertainty which elude positivistic instruments and concepts. Such large figures and large concerns are duly noted on the academic marches of English society while the life of the natives on the plains continues much as before. Yet a trickle of devotees keep up the pilgrimage to the alien altars.

THE RE-ENTRY of Karl Mannheim into the intellectual atmosphere is not such as to cause a splash, and Professor Remmling's book indicates why. He both connects and disconnects with present concerns. The concern with ideology and the relational nature of knowledge can be heard along the contemporary whispering gallery, but Mannheim's emphasis on planning awakes very few echoes. Besides, Mannheim—like T. W. Adorno—was a creature of high culture not counter-culture. He invoked the participation of the masses in the construction of the new world but did not emphasise the activity of the individual agent in negotiating the upkeep of the social world. Indeed Mannheim possessed a capacity for the analysis of cultural wholes and totalities not far removed from what is now a despised functionalism.

Remmling's own comments in the final chapter "Retrospect and Prospect" point up Mannheim's ambiguous appeal for those who retain the Marxist and phenomenological emphases of recent years. Remmling's book is not so much a critique of Mannheim's thought (though it includes incidental criticism) as a guide to Mannheim's score on the radical chart of academic virtue and vice. Mannheim's emphasis on ideas—and on the makers of ideas and on reconstruction through education—is seen as blind to the recalcitrance of the holders of power. They will hardly allow education to be subverted to the cause of democracy and radical change. Also Mannheim is charged with inclining to respect certain wrong ideas and wrong archetypes, notably those of religion. By picking on religious archetypes to express human community he ignored the archetypes which express the solidarity of labour: e.g., the Political Prisoner and

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the Unemployed Worker. Mannheim's belief in planning looks suspiciously like administrative socialism; but it can nevertheless be salvaged provided you plump for "transactive planning" whereby expert knowledge is complemented by participation and personal knowledge. Remmling wants the benefits of knowledge as well as the participatory style of counter-culture. The modest niche reserved for Mannheim in the radical pantheon is best indicated by Remmling's characterisation of the "New Sociology" as

> problem conscious, relevant, society-wide probing and future-oriented social criticism.

Mannheim would certainly have winced at the phrase but not recoiled from the thought.

Plainly Professor Remmling's book is a useful introduction to Mannheim (and particularly so in conjunction with his companion volume of pieces on the sociology of knowledge). It is not a critique of Mannheim in depth, and more especially does not enter much into the very complex problems of relativism. In my view Mannheim's attempts to escape the problems of total relativism are as unavailing as Marxist attempts to escape the problems of privileged access to truth through the veil of bourgeois unreality. But Remmling does not pursue these matters very far. There are in any case critiques available, notably in Karl Popper but also in Frank Hartung.

THERE ARE TWO THINGS I find unsatisfactory about the book. One is the historical patter about Weimar and about England in the '30s and '40s which is meant to provide a continuo to Mannheim's solo biography. This hardly rises above the level of what every progressive schoolboy knows. The other is stylistic. I assume from the text in its present condition that Professor Remmling is only marginally an English speaker or has German as the matrix within which his approach to English is formed. In that case the publishers had a duty to convert his words into ordinary reasonable English. What, for example, does it mean to say that substantive rationality "intends existing phenomena"? It means that the human reason which goes beyond technique wills the existence of what it desires. It brings reasoned intent to birth in reality. But you cannot *intend* phenomena. Then there are pages and pages of the following sort of thing.

> As a macro-level sociologist Mannheim never lost the ability to grasp social phenomena as totalities driving their dynamic unity from the changing complementarity of conflicting social relationships.

Or:

> These intellectual labours suggested to Mannheim that the understanding of historical-cultural meanings can only be achieved within a three-dimensional time perspective which fuses past, present and future with the agglutinant of modern men's action-oriented pragmatism.

The text is littered with repulsive words or non-words like embracive, conflictual, representativity, sanctional, unperspectivistic, corruptive, historistically. "Enunciate" is used to mean establish. The sociological viewpoint is converted to "the optic of sociology." "Instauration" is used as if it meant something close to installation when in fact it means renewal.

It is not Professor Remmling's fault, and it can hardly be Professor John Rex's fault as editor of the library. There must be some gremlin in the publisher's office who is indifferent to linguistic pollution. Somebody, somewhere, is consenting to the rape of language. Messrs Routledge & Kegan Paul should not allow pollution to enter the dark green cypress grove of their renowned "International Library of Sociology."

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Dahrendorf's Catalogue of Problems—By ANDREW SHONFIELD

THERE IS A QUALITY of jauntiness in Ralf Dahrendorf's style,[1] an almost audible *joie de vivre,* which serves to muffle the effect of a gloomy story. He does not intend to do this: he meticulously records the unattractive details and he contemplates some unpleasant conclusions. But one feels that his heart isn't in it. It is as if his brilliant polished rhetoric is held up to catch every scrap of light and so distracts attention from the shadow.

Yet the individual items in his tale when enumerated one by one make up a depressing list. For a start, he foresees that the capacity of industrial societies to produce increasing quantities of the goods that people want to buy will be considerably reduced in the future compared with the recent past. It is going to be a great deal more difficult to get people to agree on what is an equitable share-out when the available increase in the amount of production in any one year is very small. The new limitations on economic growth, he argues, give a sharp twist to the spiral of inflation, because neither wage-earners nor capitalists are ready to abate their claims for rising incomes on the scale to which they have become accustomed. Indeed, organised labour and capital, for all the appearance of conflict between them, are really engaged in a tacit conspiracy to secure higher incomes for the industrial sector at the expense of the rest of society. And the only way in which we can hope to check the escalation of these excessive demands on the resources available is by a fundamental change in the very structure of production—moving sharply away from the traditional, material-consuming forms of manufacture to an economy dominated by services, above all publicly provided services. However, the established interest groups which will instinctively resist a structural shift of this kind are formidable.

Matters are made worse by the sheer power of modern large-scale organisations. Even the state dare not challenge them directly. At the same time the individual citizen is increasingly displeased by the "new authoritarianism" of these organisations, whether they are part of the apparatus of public administration, of trade unions or of big corporations. He has the sense of being turned into the "slave of the instruments of his own advancement." He is in a state of grumbling rebellion. But it is not clear that there is much that he can positively do about it. The "new liberty", in the title of the book, is in large part intended to provide the answer to the "new authoritarianism." But its realisation in practice requires the existence of a large and sophisticated political public, anxious to participate in the political process and equipped to do so, but also aware of the inherent limits of such participation. The illusion of direct democracy, where every decision of government is supposed to be made on the mandate of the people, leads to another form of despotism, a more familiar one this—the Bonapartist variety or, more generally, the tyranny of the organisers of political demonstrations. Representative government with the elector according a large degree of genuine, though watchful, trust to his representative is of the essence of democratic rule.

But the trouble is that even highly representative government stands little chance of success in a straight conflict with the big organisations. They must, we are told, be accommodated in some other way—by being absorbed directly into the apparatus of government, where their leaders will form a kind of senate or second chamber of parliament. There is evidently no escape from the Iron Law of Oligarchy, only the hope that by making the oligarchs more visible and compelling them to explain themselves in public they will grow more inhibited.

Dahrendorf's picture of national parliaments in the second half of the 20th century is not an inspiriting one. On the one hand they dare not try to subject the great extra-parliamentary organisations to their will, because they invariably are worsted in such confrontations. On the other hand, even when a parliament commands full domestic consensus it is in practice unable to cope with a large segment of public affairs, because its territorial reach is too small. On an increasing range of matters the only form of effective management is by securing international agreements involving several nations often with conflicting interests. The earnest citizen full of the ardour for participation can hardly avoid a feeling of frustration in these circumstances.

[1] *The New Liberty.* By RALF DAHRENDORF. Routledge, £3.00.

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It turns out, in fact, that the "new liberty" is not only a means of getting him to participate more but also of making him recognise the inherent limits of participation. Dahrendorf's discussion of this matter and of the kindred issue of equality is central to his argument. It may be summarised, using the traditional language of the French Revolution, as follows. The excessive pursuit of equality and fraternity now seriously threatens the achievement of liberty. Fraternity is the old-fashioned word for participation in the acts of government, and it is easy to show that if all citizens are to be consulted on all collective decisions, the business of administration will be intolerably slowed down and finally stultified. And liberty is diminished when the public services which sustain a civilised existence fail to function. As to equality, the danger comes from the common impulse to insist that no individual should enjoy significantly larger opportunities to acquire wealth, education or mere enjoyment than anyone else.

The truth is, as Dahrendorf says with a fine liberal flourish, that "equal opportunities are opportunities for unequal choices." While society needs, for its protection, to set both minimum standards of life which are equally available to all and maximum limits on wealth and power at the other end, there must be "plenty of space between the common floor of rights and the common ceiling of private power."

THERE MUST BE—but is there likely to be? Is it not more plausible to suppose that the demands for equality and for fraternity, with their powerful and profound appeal to popular political feelings, will continue to be pressed relentlessly and the space for liberty steadily constricted? It is arguable that Dahrendorf with his passion for liberty, the origins of which he describes so movingly in an account of his boyhood experience in a Nazi prison cell, overlooks the fact that it is a possession which is consciously prized above other political aims by a minority only. It seems to me that Dahrendorf's master, John Stuart Mill, saw this aspect of the matter more realistically than his outraged disciple when he put the pursuit of liberty into its historical context and asserted (in a passage which Dahrendorf quotes) that it had "no application" until a society had reached an advanced stage of development—"until then there is nothing . . . but implicit obedience to an Akbar or a Charlemagne." Liberty does not have, even in the long run, a *natural* political precedence.

The point has a direct bearing on the alternative view of the future of our society, which Dahrendorf singles out for attack early in the book. It is the view developed with considerable force by Robert Heilbroner in his essay on *The Human Prospect*[2]; and it leads, through an analysis of a number of the same factors as those which Dahrendorf enumerates—above all the limitations on available material resources and the decreasingly tolerated gap in the living standards of rich and poor nations—to the conclusion that an extreme type of authoritarian régime will provide the likely means of imposing the required sacrifices on the populations of advanced countries.

There are two particularly telling aspects of Heilbroner's argument which merit attention in the present context. One is his insistence on the need for a powerful instrument of social identification, which will serve to persuade people not only to sacrifice their personal gratifications for the benefit of an identifiable group of their own contemporaries but also to carry that sacrifice forward in time and surrender present satisfactions to sustain some future generation of unknown, and unknowable, persons. If resources are to be conserved through a policy of deliberate social parsimony, which Heilbroner believes to be necessary, then the citizens of rich consumer-oriented communities of the Western type will have to be convinced of their obligations towards a continuing body, whose future members have equal rights with those at present alive to a *common* inheritance. It is most improbable that the common sense of humanity, the citizenship of the world, will provide the sufficient motive for self-imposed austerity. The prospect for such ecumenical urges would be all the dimmer in the circumstances which Heilbroner foresees, when international conflict has been sharpened by the competing claims of peoples with grossly different living standards on visibly limited resources. The nation, Heilbroner concludes, is in one form or another the most likely source of the social discipline which will be the condition for long-term survival in the future world of scarcity, over-population and violent struggle.

Moreover—and this is the second aspect of Heilbroner's thesis—there are autonomous political sentiments which, given moderate encouragement, attach themselves readily to an overriding source of authority like the nation state. It is an error, he argues, to regard great political institutions like the state as being merely *instrumental*, serving severely practical purposes which, if better performed by alternative organisations, would be simply taken over by them. The expression of collective loyalties produces its own satisfactions. Nations, city-states, and the

[2] *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect*. By ROBERT L. HEILBRONER. W. W. Norton, $5.95, paper $1.95; Calder & Boyars, £3.50, paper £1.75.

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like are not merely administrative artefacts which will be easily transcended in an interdependent world; the feelings which they arouse are more durable than that. Here we are back with fraternity; and Heilbroner's guess is that in circumstances of communal stress when liberty and fraternity are in competition with one another, it is liberty which will lose out.

NOW, IT IS TRUE that Heilbroner's scenario of future stress and physical constraints is more dire than anything that Dahrendorf asks us to contemplate. But even so Dahrendorf's catalogue of problems and of the demands that they will make on the world's capacity for disciplined change is challenging enough. He asserts for instance that unless the energy crisis is promptly met by a cut in price by the oil producers *and* by an internationally agreed programme of world energy conservation, "we are heading for a collapse without parallel, affecting not merely the free world but all countries in varying degrees." In the light of such portentous threats as this, added to the requirement of profound structural changes in our society, referred to above, which are deemed to be necessary for our survival, one is left searching for the political mechanisms that can be depended upon to contain the prospective conflicts within a framework of civil liberty.

Dahrendorf promises in his preface to produce a more systematic account of the *process* of political change implicit in his argument. The present book, he reasonably points out, has limits determined by the form of his original Reith Lectures in 1974, and can do little more than indicate the direction of his thinking and the character of his conclusions; there is no room to *prove* anything. Having myself experienced the intellectual constraints of the same operation, I sympathise with his dilemma. One has to make a choice—either to say something definite, if crude, or to spend one's precious minutes building up a case against the attack of imaginary critics. Dahrendorf fortunately chose the first course. However, I have to confess that after the intense enjoyment and stimulation that I received from the lectures when they first came out, I am left slightly bemused on a second reading. They are still very good; they provoke one constantly into mental activity—indeed there is at times an almost psychedelic effect of bright ideas exploding around one—but I am not fully persuaded by the actual arguments adduced to support the author's central thesis, that liberty is a thoroughly robust plant which has every chance of surviving and adapting itself to conditions of increased social and political strain.

THEORY and SOCIETY

Renewal and Critique in Social Theory

Editors:
ALVIN GOULDNER
PIERRE BOURDIEU
DEREK PHILLIPS
PAUL WALTON

THEORY and SOCIETY is a forum for an emerging international community of social theorists. It presents a voice for all those concerned with the philosophic, intellectual and theoretical foundations of the social sciences and sociological inquiry. It is committed to preventing the mutual isolation of the various disciplines under discussion, and is based on the premise that social theory that is ignorant of philosophy is inevitably shallow and, conversely that social theory that is devoid of the empirical has the corresponding folly of pride.

1976: Volume 3 (in 4 issues)
Prepaid Personal Subscription rate: US$13.95/Dfl. 35.00
Institutional Subscription rate: US$31.75/Dfl. 76.00

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SINCE I DO in fact share his conclusion, I want to offer, pending the more systematic exposition of the case which Dahrendorf promises us, some interim and very recent evidence in support of it. It is the kind of evidence which has little place in his analysis of the mechanics of contemporary society, indeed in some respects runs counter to it, and I think it is striking enough to be worthy of special note. It concerns our capacity to control inflation. This is one of Dahrendorf's central preoccupations, and he sees it, rightly in my view, as a test of our ability to achieve a rational ordering of society. At present, he says, we pay out a species of Danegeld to a conspiratorial alliance of workers and capitalists whose combined power is irresistible. The state in its present form can do nothing about it. There is, in fact, no means in sight of curbing the irrational greed of those who control the instruments of production. Their greed is irrational because the demands which they make are in excess of the real output available; and as their claims mount with the inevitable disappointment of their expectations, the inflationary process escalates.

I do not think that his version of the story is an adequate account of the economics of the type of inflation which we have been experiencing in the 1970s; in particular, it does not differentiate it as sharply as it should from the mild and irritating but essentially manageable inflation of the 1960s. There is no inevitable progression from the one to the other. However, my present purpose is less concerned with the economics of its origin than with the politics of its control. It is common ground that, whoever or whatever is to be blamed for starting the process, by 1974 escalating wage demands have established a self-sustaining spiral of rising prices. The evidence to which I want to draw attention is about the way in which governments in a wide range of industrial countries, acting in a number of cases with the organisations of wage-earners and employers, have tackled the problem from 1974 onwards.

The first thing to be noticed is that it was not the case that each organisation used the power attributable to its own sphere, disregarding the rest. They bargained with one another; and in the course of the bargaining it became clear that the state, if it set out to mobilise the resources that were available to it, had an extraordinarily strong hand. The picture of it as the feeble plaything of organised interest groups was very wide of the mark. The British case which most clearly gave that impression, from the successful miners' strike in early 1974 until the new Labour policy in the summer of 1975, was quite untypical of Western industrial societies as a whole. Elsewhere, the rate of increase in wages was by early 1975 slowing down, instead of escalating. Of course, the business recession which had meanwhile been turning into a serious slump helped to put a curb on total wage incomes, as it did on profits. But it can be readily shown that the slowdown in wage *demands* by organised groups occurred in advance of any decline in the price of labour in real terms in the labour market. This is a capital political fact. The trade unions were not, as it is sometimes suggested, moderating their claims for higher wages in response to the evidence of a change in the market price for labour; they deliberately held back.

The best known case is that of the German trade unions who made an explicit agreement with the German government to this effect in the autumn of 1974. Others (including the British, belatedly, in mid-1975) made implicit arrangements aiming at broadly similar effects. The key feature of this type of agreement was a concession by the trade unions that profit incomes were to increase faster than wage incomes, *i.e.*, that there was to be a redistribution of future income shares in favour of the capitalist at the expense of the wage-earner, as a necessary prelude to the recovery of investment. (The same principle is accepted in the latest British measures.) The state for its part undertook to do a number of

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things which would (a) help to damp down some price increases which were in prospect, and (b) moderate the fall in business activity.

It is interesting to observe that in neither matter was anything very dramatic promised by the state. The business slump is still in progress and prices are still rising. And that leads to the main point to which it is worth drawing attention. The state's authority was not generally brought into full play; it sufficed as a reserve power to induce the main organised interest groups to settle for a rational, though often unpopular, bargain. Sometimes, as in Japan, this was done with remarkably little overt intervention by the state; elsewhere, as in Germany, the whole process was conducted by the politicians. Disregarding these differences of political detail, it was the interest group organisations which proved themselves to be rational in their conduct, in the face of a general threat to the welfare of society, and the state which demonstrated the relevance of the reserve of authority which in so many countries it possesses in large measure.

THE TEST is not yet over. The second stage of the continuing world slump may well give rise to greater social strains than the first. Still, I would argue that the experience to date, above all the decisive reversal by agreement of wage inflation in country after country, provides important evidence about the rationality of at least some contemporary large-scale organisations and about their capacity to exercise control over their membership. It is perhaps here, in these organisations, that some of the safeguards of the new liberty—as well as some menaces to the old liberty—are to be found.

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IN our previous issue we inadvertently omitted to mention that the text of the Open Letter by **Vaclav Havel** to Gustav Husak was kindly given to us in translation by Leopold Labedz, Editor of *Survey* Magazine (Ilford House, 133 Oxford Street, London, W.1). This text appeared simultaneously in the summer issue of *Survey,* Vol. 21, No. 3 (96).

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LETTERS

Spies, Secrets, Security

DURING THE WEEK after the reviewers have been sent a new book of mine, I like to think of them all curled up with it, to the exclusion of other interests, savouring all the wise patches, chuckling at the jokes, and writing "How true!" in the margins. I do not comment on what they say except when some dimwit among them has missed one of my subtleties, or when I wish to compliment some favourable reviewer on his perspicacity. I do not as a rule have anything to say about reviews which are not unfavourable but which stop short of acknowledging that mine is the definitive work on whatever subject the book is about.

Such a review is that of Mr Constantine FitzGibbon, writing in the July ENCOUNTER about my *The Real Spy World* (Weidenfeld, 1975). Mr FitzGibbon says that the CIA's combination of functions—espionage, sabotage, propaganda, and "political action generally"—were mutually destructive and led to the Agency's practical paralysis; and that this fact was inadequately stressed in my book. Alas, he is right. If I ever have it to do over again, I will certainly reminisce a bit about how case officers of the Espionage side and those of the "Positive Action" side disliked each other and sometimes played dirtier tricks on each other than they did on the opposition; and then I will say a thing or two about how such mutual hostility was inevitable.

Espionage, after all, is a matter of sustaining penetrations of the target, and this requires working with it, not against it—our spies in Hitler's Germany being "good Nazis" and our spies in modern-day Russia being "good Communists." Most of the CIA's agents inside the USSR are members of the Communist Party; *all* of those inside the Kremlin itself are CP members, besides being government officials on good terms with their bosses. On the other hand, the CIA agents involved in "Positive Action" are recruited almost entirely from dissident groups. So long as the two controlling services were separate organisations—the former consisting mostly of Irish-American Catholic former-FBI-agents under a disciplinarian named Lyman Kirkpatrick, and the latter consisting mostly of Eastern-seaboard WASPS under an easy-going Southern gentleman named Frank Wisner—they were kept busy at the comparatively harmless pastime of spiking each other's operations. But when the two were put under one roof, under Frank Wisner, they began to cooperate. And that was catastrophic. Mr FitzGibbon appears to know as much about this aspect of history as I do, so I must appreciate his not giving me a firmer slap on the wrist than he did.

But here is where Mr FitzGibbon has *really* given me a feeling of inadequacy. He asks, "Is there an American intelligence service at all?" And then he goes on to suggest that maybe there is, that the KGB and the CIA are moribund front organisations, and that the *real* intelligence services of the West are "once again superior to those controlled by the Soviets." This is what *I* should have thought to say. Look at it this way: (1) A secret service cannot exist in the environment which has surrounded the CIA in its declining years. (2) Any civil servant or Congressman who has spent so much as one week dealing directly with problems of national security, or investigating those who do, knows very well that Americans have *got* to have a secret service so long as the Russians, the Chinese, and other communist countries have theirs. (3) Despite all the existing disciplines, and the demand for more, there will always be means for concealing an organisation, perhaps outside the government, which can secretly and effectively carry on the work of a secret intelligence service. (4) These facts are clear to Senator Frank Church and other responsible Congressmen among those who are investigating the Agency, and who can be counted on not to interfere so long as they are not forced to do so by future leakages to the press.

I will regard my optimism as justified if and when I see new security legislation of the kind such an organisation needs to ensure its continued existence, and of a kind which, whatever its stated purpose, will have the effect of preventing a recurrence of the witchhunt against our nation's protectors like the one we've just witnessed.

Meanwhile, I am consoled by reasoning like that of the astronomers who discovered Saturn. They couldn't find it in their telescopes, remember; but they knew it was there because its existence was the only possible explanation for the idiosyncracies of the planets around it.

MILES COPELAND

Bicester,
Oxfordshire

"Middle-Class Socialists"?

YOUR MARCH ISSUE featured a long and presumably important article by Mr Mark Abrams. The article was about a non-subject. To take "middle-class" first, instead of attempting a definition so we can know whom he has in mind, Mr Abrams lists a few categories which are really quite breath-taking: Civil Servants, Office workers, Teachers, Professionals. By what possible stretching of your contributor's imagination can he suggest that "office workers" are anything other than workers? His own terminology surely makes that plain. And teachers? Are they not workers, too? They are hired and fired like other workers and these days actually get lower wages than most members of the working class. How does your contributor justify putting them in a different economic class from miners? Perhaps he would reply that these categories *think* they are members of a different class. But even if that were true it would be quite unhelpful. Only objective criteria can possibly be of any use in an intelligent discussion of the subject. Anyway, it is patently not true. I know teachers and office workers and the others (we all do). They know well enough that they are workers, and it is quite absurd to try and make a separate class out of them.

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It happens that the Socialist Party of Great Britain (to which I belong) has always maintained that the very idea of a middle class is itself a non-starter. In general, you either have to work for a living (as the vast majority do) in which case you are a worker. And you prove your class every week or month when you receive your wages or salary. And if you don't need to work but can live on dividends, then you are a capitalist. As with all human organisations, there are doubtless grey areas. A small shopkeeper, who *works* all the hours to sell Players cigarettes or Smiths Crisps is a worker. A John Spedan Lewis is a capitalist. Those in a process of transition from one to the other (and it's a two-way process) are merely the exceptions that prove the rule. And Mr Abrams didn't even think about them.

And who are the socialists? Without bothering to discuss the matter, it seems that your contributor equates the term with membership of the Labour Party. It is true that such people now usually call themselves socialists (they did not always do so, by any means). But then Hitler called his lot socialists, which hardly proved anything. It happened that just recently I saw a book review in the *Guardian* by Robert Skidelsky in which he echoes the view of the author (David Coates): "The Labour Party is not, never has been and never will be an adequate engine for achieving socialism." To which an SPGBer like me can only say *Amen*.

So we are left with a long article about middle-class socialists who are neither middle-class nor socialists. They are, like (unfortunately) most miners and busmen, working-class Labourites.

L. E. WEIDBERG

London

I ACCEPT "that the Socialist Party of Great Britain . . . has always maintained that the very idea of a middle class is itself a non-starter." And I also believe that this refusal to come to terms with the real world is one reason why the S.P.G.B. has failed to make the slightest impact on either British politics or socialist thinking.

In the real world at least one-third of the adult population decline the label "working class" and instead describe themselves as "middle class"; and their rejection of the label "working class" is *not* because they "don't work but live on dividends." They mark the division between themselves and the working class on grounds of occupation, income, education, and speech. Of course, there are mavericks and marginals—some dockers with incomes well above the national average and some university students whose speech skills fall well below those of an intelligent electrician. In any case, the vocabulary and common sense of most people cope easily enough with a stratification system that embraces more than two social categories. For example, in 1972 in a survey (carried out by *N.O.P.*) people were presented with the completely neutral question:

> "Many people do use the term social class in this country. If you had to say which social class you belong to, which would it be?"

Only 5% of the total sample were completely baffled by this; without any prompting, 37% described themselves as middle class, 16% as lower middle class, 32% skilled working class, and 10% unskilled working class.

Mr Weidberg is prepared to reject these self-descriptions and demands that we stick to "objective criteria." Well, the same *N.O.P.* survey shows that the general public in applying the descriptions are, in fact, using "objective criteria" and not the ideological criteria that Mr Weidberg demands for "intelligent discussion." Thus, when asked to say what things "are most important in being able to tell which class a person is" they replied: *the way they speak* (33%), *their job* (24%), *the friends they have* (27%), *the sort of school they went to* (21%)—all objective criteria indeed.

And who are the socialists? Well yes, I did equate the term with consistent support of the Labour Party. In part, this seemed to me a convenient shorthand, but also because Labour Party members insist on describing themselves as socialists. Thus, shortly after reading my article, Mr Eric Heffer, Labour M.P. and Minister of State for Industry, addressing the Ebbw Vale Labour Party, made the following remark: "The Labour Party is a Socialist Party, which has as its basic objective the building of a Socialist society in Britain as part of a Socialist world." His text may not have the approval of the S.P.G.B., but it was certainly cleared and endorsed by Transport House.

MARK ABRAMS

London

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Sufi

MR ELWELL-SUTTON is entitled to have his beliefs on Idries Shah and about Sufism, and it is not unlikely that he shares them with one or two other people, whatever their original motivation. But the attempt to convince ENCOUNTER readers, who are mainly outside the field of Islamics, that Shah and his work are not well-established within it—that is something else, and is very misleading. The plain fact is that Shah is better established, perhaps more respected, certainly far better known, than almost any of his self-appointed detractors. This, I think, may give us a clue of value.

Anyone interested to confirm the real situation may care to consult the *Index Islamicus*. This bibliography, issued annually, concentrates upon scholarly contributions to Islamic Studies. It is compiled by Professor J. D. Pearson, Professor of Bibliography at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London. It has, of course, a section on Sufism. In the 1973–74 edition, the latest one, 36 papers on Sufism are listed. Almost two out of three of these—23 publications in all—are about the life and the work of one Sufi: Idries Shah. More than half of them are by highly respected professors. Many of them have numerous serious contributions to Sufi studies to their names. All are warmly approving of Shah's outstanding contributions to Sufism. Together they constitute a major demonstration of wholly adequate academic approval for him.

The scholars directly involved in the collected papers on Shah already published cover the widest variety of cultural areas: three are Iranians, one an Iraqi, two Indians, one Chinese, two Egyptians (one Muslim, one Copt), one Sri Lankan, one Hungarian, three British, one Jordanian, three Syrian, one American, one Pole, one Lebanese, one Pakistani and one Turk.

Mr. Elwell-Sutton has failed to inform you and your readers that these studies have been extremely well reviewed and widely commended in the world of learning. His earlier attempts to challenge the quality of work and the status and learning of these respected and established figures surely cannot go unchallenged. There seems little doubt that his remarks will not go unobserved in the academic world, with a corresponding effect upon opinions within it about Mr Elwell-Sutton himself. I cannot help but wonder, in the face of the, frankly, undeniably established status of Idries Shah and contemporary Sufi studies, what role Mr Elwell-Sutton expects us to imagine him to fill.

AHMED BULLOCK

Islamic Books,
Oxford.

Fo Forry

DEAR FIRS, It is a ridiculous affectation in publifhing a quotation from Addifon [ENCOUNTER, May, p. 49] to reproduce a ufelefs typographical diftinction between the long efs and the fhort efs. (The fourth edition of the *Dictionary of Printing Terms*, 1941, tells us that "this awkward and unsightly form of the character was first discarded by John Bell, an English publisher, about 1795, and the change was eagerly accepted and soon followed by other printers.")

Furthermore, it is moft inelegant to ufe a modern "f" when manifefting this affectation. The long efs is eafily diftinguifhed from the "f" by the ommiffion of the crofs ftroke on the right fide of the upright ftem.

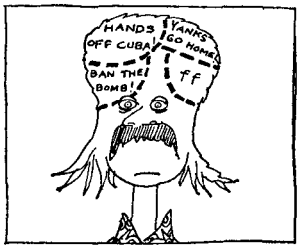
Finally, it is no lefs than abfurd to print "I FHALL CONCLUDE"—an unfettling orthographic tranfformation (fince there is no capital long efs) which unnecefsarily flows down one's reading. Fadly enough your typefetters have become type-fetters, and the ftandards of ENCOUNTER feem to be flipping.

Your faithful fervents,

MARCEL FRANCISCONO
MICHAEL KUBOVY

North Pomfret,
Vermont

Rentacrowd's Progress



ACCORDING to *an article in the* Sunday Times *on the problem of "teeny-boppers", a London company "can offer a 'rent-a bouncer' service and can send armies of large security men anywhere, at any time", when the hysteria roused in these small maenads by pop groups gets out of hand.*

*The company's name is given as Sturico. But a similar service is provided by a new branch of Rentacrowd, the mammoth mob-supplying consortium. *Rentacrowd, with typical business acumen, also supply "teeny-boppers" in any quantities required.*

Rentacrowd's research scientists are faced with a problem here. As the demand for more and more hysterical and violent "teeny-boppers" grows, so does the demand for larger and stronger bouncers.

A spokesman admitted yesterday that there was "a problem of escalation." It might be necessary, if this tendency continued, to produce automated bouncers as much as a mile high and proportionately wide. This might strain the resources even of the Rentacrowd factories. But he was confident that a solution would be found. He quoted the well-known saying: "What's good for Rentacrowd is good for England.

Peter Simple
in the DAILY TELEGRAPH

**See: "A Short Industrial History of 'Rentacrowd Ltd'" by Michael Wharton in* ENCOUNTER, *May* 1975.

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Life & Letters Today

London

SAUCY GOOSE: *Surely Harold Evans [Editor, "Sunday Times"] has mistaken his provenances? In praising the "vivid vulgarity" of the slang verb "to goose," he suggests that it is simply an Americanism.*

Now, while the current meaning of the word, indicating vigorous digital probing with erotic intentions, may indeed be transatlantic, I have always understood this usage to be a pallid relic of its original English *associations. As an example of lovable Cockney rhyming slang, "to goose and duck"—to give the full version—symbolises a far more vigorous activity. More vigorous, more vivid* and *more vulgar.* SUNDAY TIMES

London

WHO PLANS THE PLANNERS?: According to an announcement in the weekly newspaper "Planning", "We are sorry that the Planning Directory has so far not appeared. This is because it is considerably bigger than originally anticipated and is taking longer to print." DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

DEAD PIGEONS: *Sir, Though I hate to dampen Philip Howard's enthusiastic plea for the use of pigeons as unofficial postmen, couriers and newspaper copy boys to replace the inflated GPO service, I am reminded of a sad incident [Felix Barker writes]. Was it, I wonder, the last time pigeons were employed by a Fleet Street paper on a big story?*

When the submarine Thetis sank off the coast of North Wales in June, 1939, the senior reporter of the "Evening News", George Mumford, was sent to cover the disaster. An enterprising journalist of the old school, George was determined to get back the first story of the rescue operations. He hired a tug at, I think, Llandudno, and, as it had no radio, provided himself with a basket of pigeons from a pet shop.

This foresight seemed rewarded when, the following morning, we heard that someone was on the line to relay a story from Mumford. The first "take" started in effect: "As dawn broke today, grey and sullen over the desolate, tragic waters of the Irish Sea . . ." and ended "m.f." (more following).

But more did not follow. What happened as dawn broke—grey or otherwise—we never learned at Carmelite House. Silence followed until, back from the sea, George himself rang the office to hear that his couriers had not got through with what should have been his "first eyewitness" despatch.

It was unkindly suggested in the office that George, never a reporter to stint his readers of detail, had so overburdened the pigeons that they had fallen into the sea, exhausted by the sheer weight of copy. THE TIMES

San Jose, California

PRICE OF AN ACCENT: The City Council of San Jose (California), as part of its efforts to revive the city's Mexican-American heritage, has decided to amend the spelling of San Jose by adding the correct acute accent over the final "e." It will then be San José.

The addition of the accent could prove expensive, however. An official said that adding it to the "e" on all the city's signs and printed material could cost as much as $100,000. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

Washington

FEMALE ENDINGS: *A European critic once noted that "what American women suffer from is too much poor-quality attention." Certainly intelligent women must cringe at the kind of attention lavished on women in a depressing document titled "Guidelines for Equal Treatment of the Sexes in McGraw-Hill Book Co. Publications."*

The guidelines are designed to expunge "sexist assumptions" from McGraw-Hill publications, especially teaching materials. McGraw-Hill huffs and puffs through 11 *pages of proscriptions. Female-generic word forms like "suffragette" or "aviatrix" must go. Occupational terms like "fireman" and "mailman" must be replaced by "firefighter" and "mail carrier."*

All "unnecessary" references to a woman's marital status (e.g., "Mrs Meir and Moshe Dayan ate dinner") are forbidden. The word "lady" is denounced as a "role word."

The McGraw-Hill guideline writers say they just want to "reflect" reality. In fact, they want to change reality and they think they can do this by tinkering with the language.

The word "fireman" efficiently reflects reality: virtually all firefighters have been men. If women want to fight fires, banning the word "fireman" won't help and its continued existence will be no hindrance. And I, for one [George F. Will writes], do not mind if my airline pilot is female, but I don't want to be taken 38,000 *feet up by a pilot who feels insecure in the presence of the word "aviatrix."* INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

IT'S A GAS: From a travel firm's leaflet advertising a trip to Munich—

For only £27.50—YOU GET NINE FUN-FILLED DAYS AT THE BIGGEST BEERFEST IN THE WORLD

Included in the price are:

A VISIT TO THE OLYMPIC VILLAGE
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A VISIT TO THE FAMOUS DEUTSCHES MUSEUM
A VISIT TO THE CASTLE AT NEUSCHWANSTEIN DAILY TELEGRAPH

New York

QUIPS: In Brigid Brophy's new book [Anthony Burgess writes] there are, besides the very satisfactory main items, a number of pieces which should have been reserved for cocktail parties. Two of them are mere schoolgirl quips. "Trade follows the flag: 'I'm afraid we shall have to make a small charge,' said the cavalry commander." And "Scene from suburban life: 'Allow me to introduce Gretel, the Dreigroschen au pair' ". In a time of paper shortage, to give a full page to each is less arrogance than insolence. NEW YORK TIMES

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Connolly's Quote

WHY IS IT that men (and women) whose concern is literature, writing, the use of words, so often misuse and misquote the words of others? One would think that a literary journalist, for instance, would have a certain respect—not to say reverence—for the words of a writer he professes to admire. But John Lehmann in his tribute to his late friend and colleague Cyril Connolly [ENCOUNTER, May] quotes one of Connolly's most famous aperçus—and gets it wrong.

The Lehmann version, as you print it, goes like this: "In every fat man there is a thin man struggling to get out." What Connolly actually wrote (and I copy from *The Unquiet Grave* as Lehmann should have done) is this:

> "Imprisoned in every fat man a thin one is wildly signalling to be let out."

How much more vivid and amusing that is than Lehmann's lame misquotation.

RICHARD HANSER

Mamaroneck, N.Y.

I NOTICE THAT in John Lehmann's memoir (May 1975), Cyril Connolly is once again credited with originating the aphorism, slightly misquoted, that "imprisoned in every fat man a thin one is wildly signalling to be let out" (*The Unquiet Grave*, 1943, Part 1). May I take this opportunity of asserting once for all that this notion originated with George Orwell, whose version is not necessarily inferior:

> "I'm fat, but I'm thin inside. Has it ever struck you that there's a thin man inside every fat man, just as they say that there's a statue inside every block of stone?" (*Coming Up for Air*, 1939, Part III, chapter 2).

E. W. F. TOMLIN

Tall Trees,
Morwenstow,
Cornwall

"Zionism"

VERNON BOGDANOR [ENCOUNTER, June] seems to suggest that criticism of Zionism—itself, virtually by definition, "racial politics"—shows disrespect for the victims of Nazism and indicates a precondition for renewed "fascist violence" against the Jews. But to paraphrase his own argument, those Arabs who oppose the international appeasement of Israeli expansion far beyond Palestine, or favour a boycott of Jewish banks and stores, have "a perfect right to do so"—without being subjected to abuse as "anti-Semites" or (as sometimes happens) to physical attack.

HAMIL AZIZ

London

I CAN FIND nothing in my article to justify a belief that either Jews or Zionism are, *per se*, immune from criticism. Mr Aziz confuses a number of separate issues.

(1) *Of course*, anyone peacefully expressing his views on the Middle East (or any other topic) should be free from attack; (2) *of course* Arabs may trade with whom they please: but (3) I cannot see that this right extends to discrimination by Arab states against Jewish banks and stores not directly involved in the Middle East conflict. The fact that Rothschilds and Lazards lend money to Israel no more makes them "Zionists" than the U.S. trade agreement with the Soviet Union makes Dr Kissinger a Communist.

VERNON BOGDANOR

Oxford

"Amerenglish"

ROBERT CONQUEST [ENCOUNTER, January] quotes Belloc as saying, "Even if a term or a phrase is unfamiliar, the context tells you instantly what it means." The other day, I was re-reading—for the first time in twenty years—Raymond Chandler's *Farewell My Lovely*, in a 1968 British edition. I came across "Klopstein's 'Two Warts on a Behind' " which, I remember, was originally—and more felicitously, in my view—entitled "Two Warts on a Fanny." The publishers (Hamish Hamilton) obviously believed that this particular transatlantic anatomical displacement wouldn't travel.

But it seems a pity, nevertheless, that we have not yet introduced some "Amerenglish" guidance into both our education systems, perhaps in the form of jingles in the manner of Jan Morris's couplet. May I tentatively suggest a crude first draft:

> *An English tourist usually finds*
> *That U.S. fannies are behinds.*
> *But Anglo-vocab's contrapuntal;*
> *Here fannies are full female frontal.*

GRAHAM TAYAR

London

INDEX TO VOLUME XLIV

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ENCOUNTER Magazine is published in London by Encounter Ltd. (in association with the Open Court Publishing Co.), 59 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4JS

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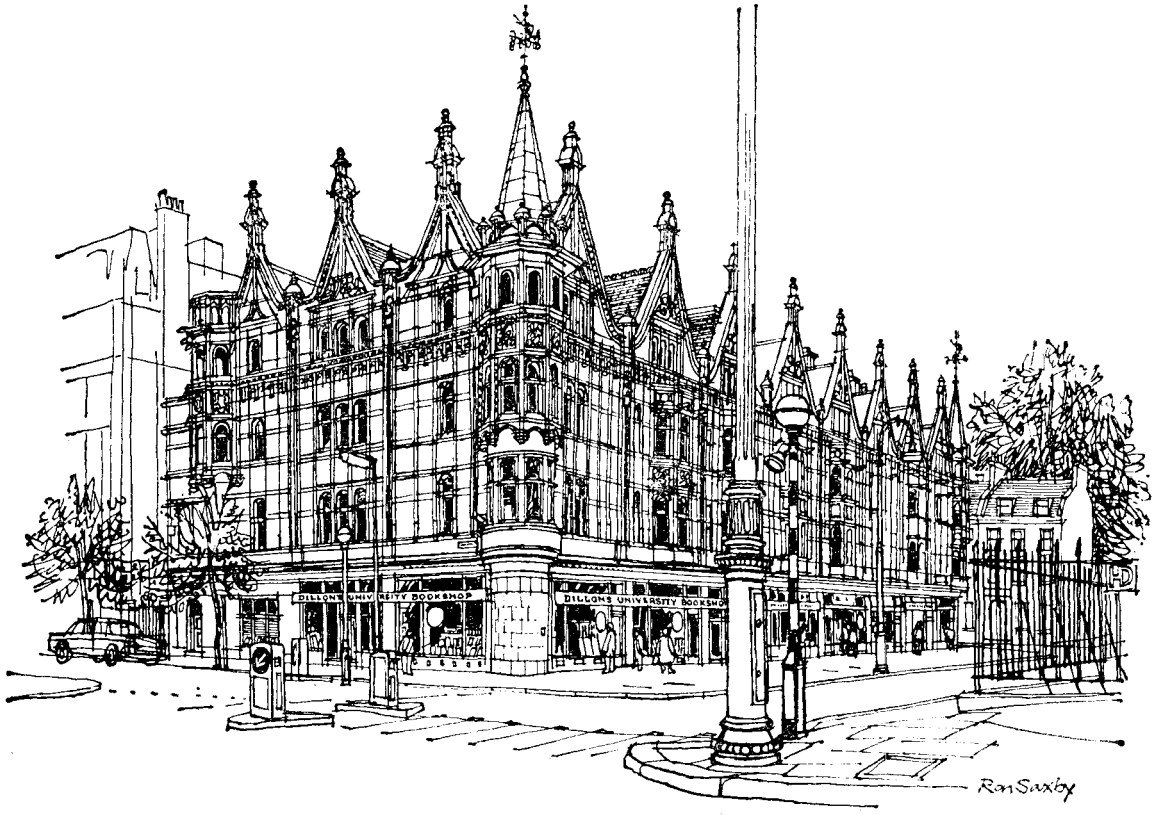

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